

DR. OGDEN'S SERMONS.

V O L. II.

I. ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

II. ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.



S E R M O N S

I. ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER AND
INTERCESSION.

II. ON THE ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN
FAITH.

III. ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

IV. ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,

TOGETHER WITH A
VINDICATION OF HIS WRITINGS
AGAINST SOME LATE OBJECTIONS.

By SAMUEL HALLIFAX, D.D.

NOW LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

C O N T E N T S.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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S E R-

S E R M O N S

ON THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.



[1]

S E R M O N I.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. xx. 3.

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME,

THAT the heavens and *all the host of them*, in which we observe so much magnificence and order; the earth, air and sea, with their various and innumerable inhabitants, in which we see and experience so much use and beauty, are the workmanship of some superiour power, and the contrivance of a wisdom exceeding infinitely that of poor mortal man; has been readily allowed by almost

SERM.

I.

SERM. all persons in every nation and age. Trifling disputes may have been raised, and the appearance of opposition kept up; but to little effect, except the confirmation of the truth. For the doctrines of Priests, the opinions of Philosophers, the traditions of the Vulgar, unite in the support of each other; and all agree to establish this great article of our faith, That the world was made by a Divine Hand; that there is a God.

Mark xii.
32.

But then, that *there is none other but he*; that all things were made, and are governed by one alone, this is a point which has not been acknowledged so universally. The Unity of God has been unknown to the common people for many ages, in almost all nations: and the learned are but debating at this day, whether it can yet be proved by the light of nature.

But, suppose we should want a *demonstration*, that there is but one God; we plainly

plainly have no grounds on which to build so much as a conjecture, that there are more.

SERM.

I.

In the frame of nature we discern the marks not only of design, but of uniformity; we see a connection between the parts, extending as far as we are able to carry our observations: which is an intimation to us that the *Universe* is *One Whole*.

This Whole indeed is too vast for our understanding to grasp; and the parts are tied together often by links too fine for our distinct inspection. Can Man comprehend the curious proportions, nice adjustments, the intricate and endless co-operations of every atom of worlds unnumbered through the immensity of Space? Yet even man is not furnished with such dull organs, but that from his station in the midst of this awful dome of nature, where all things, great and small,
in-

SERM.

I.

inanimate and living resound the glory of the Creator, he is able to hear some portion of the universal harmony that surrounds him.

But there is *discord* also among the works of God; some evil, as well as much good. Every thing does not appear to contribute to this general agreement; and if the happiness which we find in the world require us to acknowledge, that there is a God of wisdom and goodness; there is misery enough in it to be imputed to some other Author.

Yes; to *ourselves*, very much of it; and to our own voluntary choice. We will not receive the good that is offered us: we refuse to comply with the intentions of our Maker, and to act the part allotted us: we abuse the blessings of heaven, and then murmur against the Author of them; *The foolishness of man*
per-

Prov. xix.

The Unity of God.

5

*perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth
against the Lord.*

SERM.

I.

Sometimes *others* act thus perversely, and we also suffer, in various degrees, for their faults. Still our calamities flow from that *Free agency* which was imparted to us for our good, and upon the whole contributes to it; and which would lose its use, and its very nature, were the effects of it to be obstructed.

Or we suffer by *general laws*, an interruption of which would be more hurtful than the evils we complain of.

Or our sufferings arise unavoidably out of our *happiness*, or they are necessary in order to produce it. Pain, amongst men, is the offspring, or the parent of all pleasure. It is evidently so in instances exceeding all number, and probably where we cannot trace the relation.

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B

Or,

SERM.

I.

Or, lastly, the evils which we suffer are such as the Author of the world *meant* to lay upon us; they are agreeable, if not to our wishes, to the plan of his providence; and tend, as much perhaps as other things more eligible in our eyes, to the great ends of his Creation.

Thus, as the voice of nature speaks most plainly the existence of one God, it suggests nothing to us concerning more: and the rules of sound Philosophy forbid us to multiply causes without necessity, or so much as the shadow of a reason.

But Philosophy, in the *Heathen world*, even in the most learned times, enlightened but a few persons: and those few thought themselves at liberty to equivocate with the vulgar, and dissemble their faith. If in their hearts they believed in one God, they *worshipped* more; and offered their sacrifices upon as many altars as the rest of their countrymen.

The

The Unity of God.

7

SERM.

I.

The religion of the *Jews* did indeed expressly teach, and earnestly inculcate the Unity of God: yet was it so far from expelling the evil of Polytheism out of other nations, that it was not able to keep off the contagion from their own. While that people were masters of their own land, they were seldom content but with the Gods of their neighbours: so long as they continued free from the dominion of foreigners, they were ever ready to make room for their Deities. And nothing could effectually cure them of Idolatry, but a long servitude to Idolaters.

But, *what the Law could not do*, to borrow the Apostle's words on another occasion, *in that it was weak, God sending his own Son* hath eminently accomplished. Henceforth *to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

Rom. viii. 3.

I Cor. viii. 6.

B 2

But

SERM.

I.

2 Tim. i. 13.

Rom. i. 22.

But even we, enlightened, as we are, by the Gospel, must be content with what is delivered; and not, prompted by curiosity, or by vanity, presume to be *wise above that which is written*. We are to *hold fast the form of sound words*; without departing from it on either side, by explaining it into what is not meant, or into nothing; neither confining what is left general, nor denying what we can not comprehend; lest thus *professing ourselves to be wise, we become fools*.

The ideas of *Unity* and *Identity*, in the abstract, are clear; applied to a *Man*, or to the meanest *Insect*, they immediately become liable to a thousand difficulties, which hardly any two Philosophers clear up alike. And can we but be overwhelmed and lost in the *breadth and length and depth and height*, the glory and humiliation, the union with the Father, and with Man, of that *Word*, who *was in the beginning, was with God, and was God*,

The Unity of God.

9

God, and was made Flesh, and dwelt, and died among us!

SERM.

I.

This then is one thing we may do well to learn from the contemplation of the subject before us; and the less we comprehend of the subject, the more clearly we may deduce this inference; That it becomes us to be humble in our opinion of our own accomplishments; but especially of our knowledge, and above all, of our knowledge of God: never to dictate, nor yet be forward to contradict. It is wrong, no doubt, to be ignorant and dogmatical: but where is our merit in being obstinate, when we are no wiser? How often in these altercations have both parties been the champions of Error? how long disputed without meaning? But such, alas! is our forwardness: in pursuit of Truth, which yet flies from us, we abandon that Charity which would make us happy.

B 3

We

SERM.

I.

We may learn also, not only to be humble in our thoughts and words, but thankful and obedient in our hearts and lives. The Divine Nature is incomprehensible; but our obligations and duty are evident. We are ignorant in what manner the Father, the Son, and Spirit are united: we are sure that we have been created; we believe that we have been redeemed; and if we have not yet learned, let us desire and strive to experience what it is to be sanctified also. The mysterious essence of God *he* knows best, who possesses the greatest degree of resemblance to him, and is himself, as the Apostle speaks, *partaker of the Divine Nature*.

2 Pet. i. 4.

1 John ii.
3, 4.

The scripture is full of this great truth, and in this article at least it is sufficiently clear. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

Without

Without obedience, our knowledge is but ignorance, our wisdom folly; and our belief no better, nay, it is worse than infidelity. The more we know of our Maker, and of his will, if we do it not, we shall be *beaten with the more stripes*. Orthodox opinions, not accompanied with a good life, like blossoms without fruit, by promising fairly, aggravate the disappointment.

What is it but mockery to discourse of the Supreme Being, were it ever so properly, if I pay no respect to his authority? I define, suppose, all his attributes, but regard none of them; and while I contemplate his perfections, neither love, nor fear, nor resemble him. How much superiour to me is the most illiterate Rustic, who is faithful, just, and merciful? the wildest savage, who *does by nature the things contained in the law*? and the heretic, who holds his mistakes with modesty, and adds not immorality to his errors?

SERM.

I.

Thou believest, that there is one God; thou doest well; the Devils also believe, and tremble. If our life be bad, the very apostate Spirits, who are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, are religious as we are; and we have reason to be sensible of all their apprehensions: The same faith should be productive of the same fears; we too may *believe, and tremble.*

Deut. vi. 4,
5.

Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. The strength of the sentiment is to be estimated by the influence it hath upon our life and actions. Whatever it be which we suffer to occupy such a place in our affections, as to withdraw us from our duty, That becomes our God,

Every immorality, indeed, is incompatible with the belief of one God, and the supreme regard due to him. But there

there is one vice, which the Apostle delights to represent in this point of view:

Covetousness, which is Idolatry; the covetous man, who is an Idolater.

SERM.

I.

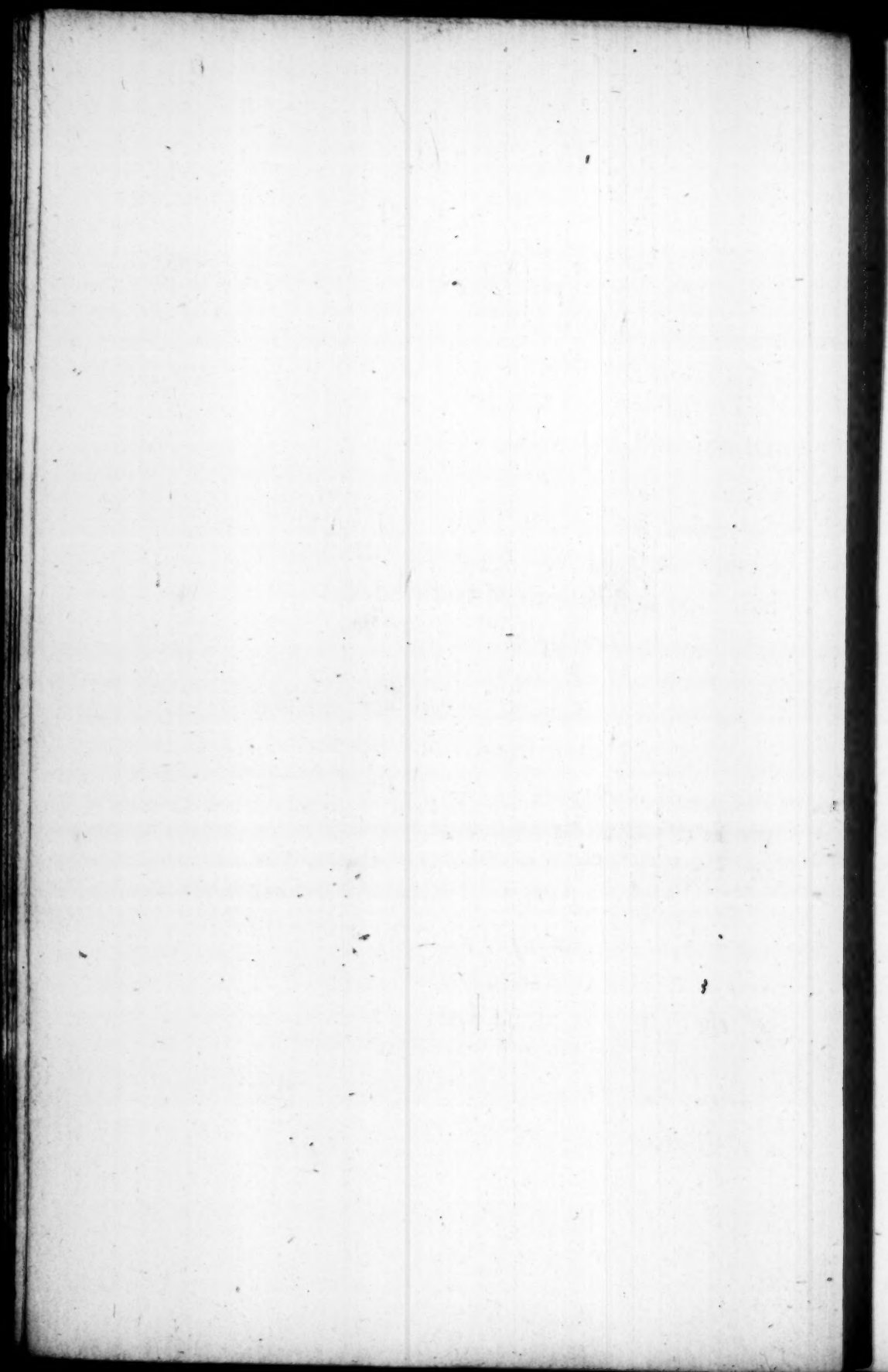
Col. iii. 5.

Eph. v. 5.

The golden Image is set up in every nation, and has never wanted worshippers. Among the professed servants of the one true God, how many altars should we find, could we read the heart, inscribed and dedicated to this Idol!

All our unjust acquisitions are so many oblations to *Mammon*: and we are his servants and worshippers, and not God's, when our thoughts, time, and affections are so engaged by riches, that we violate, or neglect, for the sake of them, the duty we owe to God or man. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1 John ii.
15.



S E R M O N II.

SECOND COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. xx. 4, 5.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY
GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS
OF ANY THING THAT IS IN HEAVEN
ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH
BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER
UNDER THE EARTH. THOU SHALT
NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM,
NOR SERVE THEM.

THE medicine administered for the
cure of one distemper will some-
times bring on another; and this in dis-
orders of the mind as well as body; and
in both chiefly where the *habit* is bad.
What wonder indeed that our applica-
tions are unsuccessful, when, to use the
expression of the Prophet, *The wound*
REFUSETH to be healed?

SERM.
II.

Jer. xv. 18.

Where

SERM.

II.

Where little pomp, and few ceremonies are used in the celebration of God's worship, it is too often neglected, or attended with indifference.

His adorable perfections, and divine benefits are all lost upon us. The imagination, wanting a sensible object to lay hold on, is unmoved: and we can present our supplications with lifeless lips and a cold heart before the Author of all Being, and Giver of all good.

But when an English Protestant happens to be present in the congregations of Catholics abroad, he is amazed to observe such fervours of devotion, as he was never a witness of among his own countrymen; such violent emotions and rapture, as are not produced by prayers put up directly to Heaven, and the simplicity of a reasonable service.

On the other hand, we allege that those very representations and symbols
which

which appear so great a help to devotion, are the hindrance of true piety and virtue; and this both among the *higher ranks* of mankind, and the *vulgar*.

SERM.

II.

The former of these, having the sense to see that Religion cannot consist in such ceremonies, hastily conclude that it is wholly imposture and delusion; and that all the preaching of the Gospel is but fraud, and the profession of it hypocrisy or enthusiasm. They are made utterly unbelievers by such pious shews: religion is killed by being cherished overmuch: and there is no where to be found so much Infidelity, as in those countries, where there is most of this appearance of Devotion.

The *common people* too, for whose benefit these decorations of religion were designed, are not a little injured. For besides that they are apt to take up the opinions of their betters, and when Irreligion is esteemed Politeness, soon think themselves

SERM. selves qualified to be infidels, they get by
II. these means wrong notions of religion,
which are always favourable to corruptions in practice: if they fall not into Atheism, they become either enthusiastical or superstitious; and in all the three cases, their lives, it is likely, will be wicked.

When they are kindled into *enthusiastic* fervours, they feel an internal impulse, which will hearken to no restraint, and are carried out a great way beyond the ordinary road of duty. The offices of common life are neglected; the calls of nature, and of kindred are unheard, and God's world must become a wilderness, if all men were thus to worship him.

More usually a multitude of religious rites, and a shewy worship leads the common people to *Superstition*. They are taught to place their religion in practices, which at best are but steps towards it. They mistake the means for the end, and are much engaged in the service of God, without -

without Godliness. The Divine Being is dishonoured by their opinions of him; while they think he can be pleased with performances of no value, and offended without a fault: as if the heart and life were not of more consideration with him than words and gestures, or any offering could be preferred before innocence and charity. It is from such notions as these, that men contract the *Judaical* disposition, and exercise the righteousness of a Pharisee; adorning the temple, if they leave their parents in necessity: they cringe at God's altar with hardened hearts; and are willing to atone by the mockery of penance, and numbered prayers, for the want of the Love of God, and of Justice to man.

So true is it, that Religion, as well as other objects, naturally beautiful, is seen to best advantage when adorned with moderation; and suffers alike by too much Art, and by the hand of ignorance.

SERM.

II.

It is often easy to see the mischief in the two extremes, and yet difficult to assign the exact mean at the best distance from them both. As Catholics are liable to censure for the abuse of religious rites; some Protestants are justly blameable for vehemently rejecting the whole use of them: mighty earnest in their aversion to little matters, and formal in the very abhorrence of forms. Our church in her public service, we think, is neither destitute of grace and dignity, nor yet laboriously or fancifully ceremonious; neither supinely negligent, nor vainly ostentatious. She recommends to her sons, and desires to instil into them such a reverence for religion as may be united with the love of it, a sound piety untainted by hypocrisy or enthusiasm.

Let us then improve both under her care, and by her example; fearing God with all solicitude, yet without that frivolous anxiety which is the parent of many scruples and but small improvement; and
obeying

The Use of Symbols and Ceremonies.

21

obeying men too, * *them that have the rule over us*, with a willing mind, but without servility; as † *free, but not using our liberty for a cloke of maliciousness.*

SERM.

II.

* Heb. x. ii.

17.

† I Pet. ii.

16.

Let us have a tender conscience, with a teachable temper; *giving no offence*, and taking as little as is possible; and yet ready with an honest *answer to every man*, *that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us.*

2 Cor. vi.

3.

I Pet. iii.

15.

Let us be obliging without selfish views, without partiality, without fear; and pious indeed, but neither frantick nor censorious; *fully persuaded in our own mind*, and *shewing all meekness to all men*; active, and patient; warmed with zeal, and illuminated by knowledge.

Rom. xiv.

5.

Tit. iii. 2.

Let us add humanity to our godliness, and *to faith, virtue*; and uniting, what indeed cannot dwell asunder. Religion and Charity, recommend what we practise, *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*,

2 Pet. i. 5.

Tit. ii. 10.

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C

and

SERM. and be * *living members of his body, which*
 II. *is the church.*

*Eph. v. 30.
 i. 22, 23.
 Col. i. 24.

However agreeable the doctrines of our faith, or the mode of our worship may be to our own judgment, or even to the word of God, they will avail us but little, if our life be not answerable to them. The purity of our principles must be transferred into our practice; the holiness of our prayers pass into our disposition and deportment.

It has been observed of the Heathens, that their errors must needs have an ill influence upon their lives; and that it was difficult indeed for them to be virtuous, while their religion itself was impure, and their very Gods impious.

Mal. i. 13.

Rom. vii.
 12.

Our God is of *purser eyes than to behold evil*: and, *the commandment is holy and just and good*. We are not exposed to the same temptation, but then we are without their excuse. *That which is good*
 may

may be * *made death unto us*; and every SERM.

additional motive to goodness make us II.

still more the children of perdition. * Rom. vii.

Christians, who lead the life of Infidels 13.

and Heathens, must expect, not *their* punishment, but a worse.

We *Protestants* especially are on all accounts obliged to this sanctity in our lives, and self condemned if we neglect it. We pretend not to know any way of Salvation without innocence, or without repentance followed by real reformation in life and practice. The great benefits offered to all in the Gospel, every man by God's grace must secure to himself. No benediction, alas! that we can pronounce over any one, will make a Saint of him who continues in sin. The Spirit itself 1 Theff. v. may be *quenched*; and *the grace of God* 19. 2 Cor. vi. 1. *received in vain*: yet, not wholly in vain; since it will redound to the vindication of his judgments, and the greater glory of the supreme Justice in the final condemnation of the wicked.

SERM.

II.

Can it avail us in the last day, that our Religion was *reformed*, while we *ourselves* were not so? we thank God that we are separated from the errours, and freed from the chains of Popery, without breaking out into a state of religious anarchy. But if in this land of light and liberty, we be yet blinded by corruption, and slaves to sin, all honest men of every religion, and if there can be any honest upright man of no religion upon earth, they will all *rise up in the judgment against us and condemn us. Many shall come from the east and west, from every region, and of all professions, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac, with Patriarchs, Apostles, and Saints, in the kingdom of Heaven, while the children of the kingdom, the professors of Christianity, and pretenders to Reformation, are cast, together with all the workers of iniquity, into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Matt. viii.
II, 12.

SER-

S E R M O N III.

SECOND COMMANDMENT. PART II.

E X O D. xx. 5, 6.

VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN, UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME : AND SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

WHEN for the encouragement of piety, God is pleased to declare, that He will *shew mercy unto thousands of them that love Him, and keep his commandments*, that is, to the remotest relations and latest descendants of an eminently good man, treating them with peculiar tenderness, rewarding with an opener hand, and punishing more sparingly, for

SERM.

III.

SERM.

III.

his sake to whom they belong, or from whom they spring; we take all these offers in good part, and have no difficulty in being reconciled to so gracious a dispensation. There is no complaint in this case of the want of a due *proportion* between the merit and the recompense: we easily find ourselves qualified to receive kindneses; and consent readily that Almighty God may be as liberal as he will, and with as little reason.

But it is much otherwise in the case of *punishments*. For if, in like manner, for the discountagement of impiety and vice, He has seen it necessary to descend to threatenings; and intimate, that He is a *jealous God*, not willing to *give his glory to another*; that *He will repay fury to his adversaries*; and to *eminent Idolaters* will give to drink *the cup of the fierceness of his wrath*, not only full, but *flowing over* on those around them; here we are by no means so soon satisfied; we immediately become curious and inquisitive;

Isa. xlii. 8.

Isa. lix. 18.

Rev. xvi.

19.

Vindication of Threatenings.

27

SERM.

III.

quisitive, desire to see the grounds and reasons of his proceedings, and have a multitude of objections against the wisdom and equity of the Divine Administration. 'Tis in vain to talk to us of general laws, or the welfare of the world; we find no plan of providence defensible, by which we ourselves are sufferers; nor allow that the good of the Universe ought to be purchased at so great a price as the affliction of persons so innocent and well-deserving.

Both innocent, and deserving! alas! who are they? or where to be found? Do we not boast of imaginary qualifications, and lay claim to titles, that may be valuable indeed, but are not our's? Does it concern us what are the rights of such persons, if we are not of the number?

There is none good but one, that is God. His angels he chargeth with folly: and the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm! He knows our desert, that it is shame and punishment.

Matt. xix.

17.

Job iv. 18.

xv. 15.

xxv. 6.

SERM.]

III.

ment. We stand naked and open before his eyes; proud, and poor; clamorous and ignorant; demanding recompense and praise, when we should deprecate his displeasure; and challenging justice, while ourselves are the criminals. Well may we submit to the Divine Wisdom, and patiently take our share of evil, according to his will, and for the good of his world; when we reflect, that the least of his mercies is more than our merit; and the greatest of those sufferings, which for so many reasons he inflicts, are less than we have deserved by our own iniquities.

But *children* at least are innocent: They can be guilty of no crimes to cry for vengeance, and call down that *indignation which resteth upon sinners*. If they have no right to recompense for services, which they have not discharged; is it just to expose them to punishment for transgressions they were not able to commit?

The

The word *children*, in the language of Scripture, is not confined to *infants*. When it is written, *I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the children*, their age is not specified: There is nothing said to denote their infancy, or their innocence. *Unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*: The title of *Haters of God* was purchased indeed by their ancestors; it is inherited, and deserved too by themselves; who give proof of their legitimate descent, and fill up the measure of the iniquity of their fathers, by their own personal *atchievements*.

Or were it otherwise; were they such as could not *discern between the right hand and the left*: who is the giver of life? Is not God? If he had never given it, had he been to blame? If he takes it back, is not his will a reason? may he not withdraw from us the benefits, which he himself has lent; and whenever he sees fit, without any consent or demerit of ours, reduce us to insensibility, or to nothing?

Be

SERM.

III.

Matt. xx.
15.

Be it, that he is bound by a law of justice, that will not bend even to save the Universe from ruin; he is surely not answerable for the resumption of his favours, as he did not engage for the continuance of them, but may *do what he will with his own.*

Nay, should he at any time proceed even further than this, oppressing with calamities those whom he had never loaded with his benefits, and rendering the life of the most innocent worse than death; we may reflect, that he holds the reins of nature in his hand; that we see but a little of his ways; that it will always be in his power, as it is in the power of no other to remember, restore, and *rectify*. That all souls are in his power, and live before him. Even death removes us not out of his empire; He can still recompense the sufferings of his servants beyond the grave, and change the garments dipped in blood into robes of glory. His uncontrollable *power* becomes the foundation of just *authority*;

Vindication of Threatenings.

thority; and he has rights which can appertain only to the *Ruler* of the Universe, besides those that belong to him as the *Author* of it.

31
SERM.
III.

But after all, there is really no necessity, that, in order to vindicate the sanction in this commandment, we should trace with so much anxiety the rules of justice, and the foundation of morality: It is sufficient only to open our eyes, and have recourse in this case to experience.

Whether the Law of Moses be the word of God, or no; the world, I presume, is his work: the laws of *Nature* at least are of his appointment. Now according to these laws, we see that children are every day suffering the most grievous calamities, on account of the crimes of their parents and progenitors. It is God's will, that they should do so: he has made the world so, that they must. What therefore we know he hath done, in many instances which we see, we may well believe

SERM. believe he will do in others, if he be pleased
III. to tell us so.

But the instances which we see, are according to the course of nature. That is the very thing insisted on. God hath established the course of nature; and by the course of nature we find a multitude of such sufferings inflicted, as those which he threatens in the commandment.

Would you urge, that these natural sufferings are not *punishments*? Shall I ask whether they are *visitations*? Alas! to how little purpose both of us! Will our words make any alteration in them? Are the *things* changed, because we *name* them differently? Do they become, either less the act of Almighty God, or less calamitous to those on whom they fall?

When a new-born infant is carried off by a malady, owing, suppose, to the intemperance of its parent, the child is not to blame, yet it feels pain and dies.

It

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It is written, * *The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David.* Are not the laws of nature, by which the child of the intemperate person dies, the hand of the same God, who slew this child of David? Or was this sufferer more innocent, than the other?

SERM.

III.

* 2 Sam. xii.
15.

The Supreme Governor is directed, no doubt, by his wisdom and rectitude in all his actions, and all his appointments. The reasons of his general laws, and of his particular acts may be different, and yet both, no doubt, are alike good. But in the guilt of the parents, and the consequent death of the innocent children, the two instances are perfectly similar: and no complaint can be made against the Divine Government in favour of the one sufferer, that will not be equally applicable to the other.

Can we but admire that heavenly wisdom, which *reacheth*, as the wise man speaks, *from one end to another, and sweetly*

Wisd. viii.

1.

SERM. *sweetly doth order all things?* and among
 III. the rest, hath established this harmony
 ————— between natural religion and revealed?
 in so much that every cavil at the doctrines of revelation, is found to be an objection against the religion of nature, and an arraignment of the Creator of the world.

Ezek. xviii.
 29. ver. 2.

Yet, say we, *The way of the Lord is not equal: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. Therefore will I judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.*

You complain of the partiality of my Providence; therefore will I be indeed impartial to you, and deal with you according to your deserts: you demand justice, and you shall have it; but remember, that it will descend in punishment. Since you call me so strictly to account, I will be strict and exact in my reckoning with you: *I will judge you, O house*

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house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.

SERM.

III.

Oh ! can there be a severer threatening in the whole storehouse of divine vengeance ? How impatiently do we call out, for what will be our greatest calamity ! Alas ! God is but just, when He condemns us sinners to everlasting punishment : and is this, what we desire of Him ? this, what we reproach Him for refusing ? *Forgive Him this wrong.* His denial may be no more than a delay. The recompense we require may overtake us : not so soon indeed as we ask, or as we have deserved ; but in full weight and measure at last, and with such clear *demonstration* of it's justice, as to overwhelm all our complaints and hopes together.

Instead of censuring the Divine ways, let us amend our own. Let us do, what we know certainly to be *our* duty ; and not presume to say what is *His* : *His Duty ! to us !* who, what are we ? *He giv-*

Job xxxiii.
33.

eth

SERM. *eth not account of any of his matters. He*
 III. will do what He sees fit; and that will be
 ————— what is so.

Nay, He is ready to do for us, not that which is *not* right, *That be far from Him*; but that which we have no right to require: He will reward us, if we do what is but our duty; and when we do it not, if we repent, He will forgive.

Ezek. xviii.
 30, &c.

Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin: It is the very application, with which Almighty God concludes a long Apology for that conduct, which we find liable, it seems, to so many objections: but to this conclusion, at least, we can have none; or none that we will avow. Such offers of mercy, as they are plain to be understood, so they must of necessity be approved by us. It remains, that we thankfully embrace them. *Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart,*

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*heart, and a new spirit ; for why will ye
die, O house of Israel !*

SERM.

III.

Lastly, let us look with reverence on that obvious but awful dispensation, by which the behaviour of every individual is connected with the welfare, or the sufferings of so many persons besides himself: As a bad man is a publick calamity, which yet under the direction of the Father of all, will terminate we hope in good: so a pious and eminently worthy person is an universal blessing; reaping the fruit of his virtues in his own happiness, spreading the voice of joy and health throughout the dwellings of the righteous, and entailing the divine blessing on those that come after him to the latest generations.

S E R M O N IV.

SECOND COMMANDMENT, PART III.

JOB xl. 3, 4.

THEN JOB ANSWERED THE LORD, AND
SAID, BEHOLD, I AM VILE ; WHAT
SHALL I ANSWER THEE ? I WILL LAY
MINE HAND UPON MY MOUTH.

BEING called upon to give an ac-
count of certain sums of money
belonging to the publick, the Roman
General, you know, returned for answer,
It was on this day I conquered Hannibal.

SERM.
IV.

Almost after the same manner, if we
might presume to draw such parallels,
when Almighty God is represented here
in the book of Job, as descending from
Heaven to put an end to the long debate
concerning the equity of his providence,

SERM.
IV.

he regards neither arguments nor answers; condemns his defenders, offers nothing for himself; but when you expect his reasons, has recourse to his authority: and for a reply to all complaints of his injustice, *The Lord answered unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?*

Job xl. 9.

Job xlii. 2,
3, &c.

The pious patriarch seems also to be sensible of the weight of this argument; and, however bold and clamorous before, is convinced at last by such decisive reasoning: *I know, that thou canst do every thing; therefore have I uttered that I understood not: mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

What pretensions indeed can man possibly have to expostulate with his Creator? Where is the wrong, if he who made us all, take away the life of any, guilty or innocent, whenever he pleases?

But

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But we are told, that he has *promised* not to act in a manner so arbitrary. And one of the most remarkable passages of Scripture to this purpose, is that in the prophet Ezekiel: *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.*

SERM.

IV.

Ezek. xviii.
4, 20.

It is asked, How is this consistent with the sanction annexed to the second commandment? And does it not amount to an *abrogation*, or at least to a *suspension*, of it?

Abrogation! and *Suspension!* alas! such language, is not enough suited to the imperfection of human knowledge, and favours too much of *system*.

In the *day of judgment*, we know, that *Every one shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; and, by

2 Cor. v.
10.

D 3

God's

SERM. God's grace in Christ, shall * *have re-*
 IV. *joicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

* Gal. vi. 4. And in regard to the present life, these predictions of the prophet Ezekiel, in whatever extent they were meant, were, no doubt, faithfully fulfilled; though we may be little able, we especially at this distance, to specify the times, or persons, or occurrences, of which they were spoken.

It may be more easy perhaps to single out an event or two, of which they certainly were *not* intended.

2 Kings
 xxiii. 26, 27.

The destruction of *Solomon's temple*, for example, together with the captivity of *seventy years*, was plainly of the number of those punishments, which were inflicted, not only for the sins of the sufferers, but also for the sins of those who went before them. *Like unto him* (that is *Josiah*) *was there no king, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might. Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness*

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fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah.

SERM.

IV.

And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire.

2 Chron.
xxxvi. 19.

Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did: and also for the innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon.

2 Kings
xxiv. 3, 4.

The destruction also of the *second temple*, and the astonishing slaughter and excision almost of the whole people of the Jews, which accompanied and followed it, as they are plainly foretold by our Lord, so they seem to be spoken of by Him as a *Divine Punishment*, and special Judgment, not only for the crucifixion of our Lord Himself, but also for the violence done to all the Holy men and Pro-

SERM.

IV.

* Matth.
xxiii. 32,
34, &c.

Luke xi.
51.

phets that had been before Him. * *Fill ye up the measure of the Fathers.—Behold, I send unto you Prophets, and wise men, and Scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from City to City: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the Altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.—I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.*

And that we may the less wonder at these examples of divine punishment, or at least may mingle reverence with our amazement, in the very same manner Almighty God seems to have dealt sometimes with *other nations* besides the Jews; bearing with them long in their iniquities, and then interposing at last, by his special providence, to take the more exemplary vengeance for the sins of many generations
together.

together. * *Thou, saith He to Abram, shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age: but in the fourth generation, they, (that is, thy posterity,) shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet FULL.*

SERM.

IV.

* Gen. xv.
15, 16.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, (they are the words of the Prophet Samuel to King Saul, about four hundred and fifty years after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt,) I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt: now go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. The Amalekites were indeed themselves sinners; but the offences also of their forefathers, you see, for many generations, are taken into the account, to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and aggravate their condemnation.

1 Sam. xv.
2, 3.

Acts xiii.
20.

1 Sam. xv.
18.

What

SERM. What shall we say more? or what other
 IV. choice indeed is left us, but to confess our
 ————— ignorance, and acquiesce in God's will?

Pf. xcvi. 2. *Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat; but clouds and darkness are round about him.* His very truth, and mercy, by which we live, on which all our hopes rest, however glorious and resplendent in Him, are shewn to human sight with a lustre dim and interrupted; the brightness of a sky broken with clouds, and wet with the drops of rain.

When we *discern* the footsteps of wisdom and goodness in the works or the word of God, how just is it to acknowledge, and delightful to admire them? *It is a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful.* Yet all our religious sentiments may be properly tinged with awe: *Serve the Lord in fear; even rejoice unto him with reverence.*

To represent also the divine wisdom to others, in order to awaken the same just sentiments

sentiments in them, is on every account highly commendable. But here too, let Understanding be our leader, and our companion Modesty. Our charity should be illuminated by knowledge, and the flame of zeal tremble. Otherwise, the apologies we make for Providence may themselves want pardon; and our panegyrics on the Almighty be *the sacrifice of fools*. *My wrath is kindled against thee*, said the Lord to one of his three famous advocates, *and against thy two friends: therefore offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right.*

SERM.
IV.

Ecclef. v. 1.

Job xlii.
7, 8.

Our good will may not always atone for our presumption. *Will ye speak wickedly for God?* Dare we draw near even to vindicate the most holy without some sense of our own defilement? He is attacked impiously, we rush in irreverently: The ark is shaken, we put forth unhallowed hands.

Job xiii. 7.

2Sam. vi. 6.

God

SERM.

IV.

* Pſal.
lxxxix. 8.

** God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.*

Humility, the moſt profound and perfect ſubmiſſion, is the proper diſpoſition of every creature in his preſence; of angels, archangels, all, and the higheſt orders of celeftial Beings that miniſter before the throne of God: how much more
 Job xxv. 6. *of Man that is a worm, and the ſon of man which is a worm.*

We ſubmit then, after much diſputing on a dark ſubject; after much diſputing, perhaps darker; we ſubmit, Lord, ourſelves to thee; our conduct to thy command, and our blind reaſon and wordy wiſdom to thy heavenly light. The very ſentiments of truſt and gratitude, which are inſpired by thy unnumbered mercies, we temper with reverence and godly fear. Thy *goodneſs* we cannot ſearch to it's ſource; but we are ſure we have not deſerved it: and thy *judgments*,
 if

if they fall on our head, will only descend upon the guilty. No opposition can be made to this instance of thy justice; and however disposed to complain or cavil, we must at least approve the sentence of *our own* condemnation.

SERM.

IV.

What can we do, but flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us? Him, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; we, unprofitable servants, rewarded for His merit; we, sinners, sheltered from the storm of deserved wrath under His sufferings.

Hab. vi. 18.

1 Cor. i. 30.

We dispute against God's providence, and call his attributes into question, when the innocent are afflicted: Behold here the only person who was truly such; *it pleased the Lord to make his soul an offering for sin, which he committed not; he had done no violence; yet was he stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised*

Isa. liii.

SERM. *bruised for our iniquities. All we like*
 IV. *sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath*

laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Will you accept these offers of divine goodness? Do you consent to be saved on such terms? Is the grace of God
 ROM. V. 15. welcome, though it be a *Free gift*? and if you could not merit such mercy; can you be thankful for it?

Or will you rather, perhaps, stand up in vindication of your rights? refuse to be punished, when you have not offended; and for another's sufferings disdain to be forgiven?

Alas! we know not what we do, when we do other than conform to the purposes of God. It is His world: and submission to Him is the summit both of virtue and of wisdom. All is right which He wills; every thing good that comes from God.

The

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* *The pestilence that walketh in darkness,*
the sickness that destroyeth in the noon day;
the most extensive and terrible of his
judgments, which distinguish not, to our
eye, the righteous from the wicked; pi-
tying neither the innocence of infancy,
nor the infirmities of age; but laying
waste the works of art and nature toge-
ther, covering the cultivated land with
desolation, and cutting off from the
crowded city man and beast, are all the
messengers and ministers of God: and we
know that they all, for *we know that all*
things, work together for good to them that
love God.

SERM.

IV.

* Pf. xci. 6.

Rom. viii.
28.

S E R-

S E R M O N V.

THIRD COMMANDMENT. PART I.

6

JAMES v. 12,

ABOVE ALL THINGS, MY BRETHREN,
SWEAR NOT; NEITHER BY HEAVEN,
NEITHER BY THE EARTH, NEITHER
BY ANY OTHER OATH.

WHEN a particular vice is observed to be predominant, the preacher sets himself to oppose it with all his might. He draws out all his train of reasons and arguments; and if he find himself furnished with any stores of eloquence also, he scruples not to make use even of that dangerous weapon. He represents the irregularity against which he is engaged, as the most heinous of offences: whatever other crime we overlook, he requires us to beware of this capital evil; and prohibits every action that

SERM.

V.

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E

but.

SERM.

V.

but approaches near it, in the most comprehensive expressions, and under the severest penalties. For the making of necessary exceptions, and limitations, we are left to our own reflections, to nature, to experience, and the common sense of all the world. In the mean time, Casuistry, being no part of his province, he presses forward to dissuade, rebuke, and threaten. He stays not to look around, and collect all the cases where his maxims may give way; nor lets the force and flame of his exhortations die, under the weight of unseasonable and frigid distinctions.

Above all things, my brethren, swear not. How! Is the sin here forbidden, the worst of all sins? Grows there no other offence so rank in that soil, fertile of vice, the heart of man? It is indeed utterly incapable of defence, or excuse; foolish, profane, and hurtful; dishonourable to the Supreme Being, and detrimental to mankind. But so, alas! are many other vices.

All Oaths are not unlawful.

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SERM.

V.

vices. All indeed are so, either directly or in their consequences. But some there are surely in themselves so odious, in their effects so fatal, that they may be allowed to claim this infamous pre-eminence; so that he who swears, and that inconsiderately and falsely, *by heaven, or by the earth, or by any other oath*, however liable to blame and punishment, will hardly fall into a greater condemnation.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, — Eph. vi. 16.
above all things, have fervent charity. — 1 Pet. iv. 8.

We need not set the graces and virtues of our religion in competition with each other; we distinguish best, when we are possessed of all. It is not necessary to weigh the vices in so exact a balance. The very same apostle, who is in this instance so urgent, *above all things, my brethren, swear not*, has already taught us, that *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.* James ii. 10.

SERM.

V.

 Matt. v.
34, &c.

The text of St. James is taken from the words of our Lord in his sermon on the mount. *I say unto you, swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; and so on.* After this follows almost immediately: *I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.* What! not hold his hand at least, if it were stretched out to murder me? If God ever give him the grace to repent, it will alleviate the anguish of his remorse, that the crime which he had the wickedness to attempt, he had not the unhappy success to execute. *Turn to him the other also:* How! will you deny me the use of that prudent precaution, which is even commanded by our Lord himself? *when they persecute you in one city, flee unto another.*

 Matt. x.
24.

But the persons who scruple to swear, disclaim resistance also: and in this they are consistent at least, if they be not wise.

It

It is written, *If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*—Are they willing to deliver up their property always to the first invader? Of these rights they are sometimes, and with reason, a little more tenacious.

SERM.

V.

Let all wrath, and anger be put away from you, says the Apostle Paul; yet he himself had written but a few lines before, *be ye angry, and sin not.* And our Lord himself, when *they watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day, looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* Honour all men: love the brotherhood. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church. Children, obey your parents: honour thy father and mother.—and yet, *If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

Eph. iv.
31.

Eph. iv.
26.
Mark iii. 5.

I Pet. ii.
17.
Eph. v. 25.
vi. 1, 2.

Luke xiv.
26.

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V.

It is not the mere sound of a word, that we can rely upon for the knowledge of what the scripture teaches in any case : the nature of the subject, the scope of the writer, the lights afforded from other parts of scripture, and from reason also, deserve all to be attended to. So that the true interpretation of a passage is sometimes very different from that, which may be first suggested to a hasty heedless hearer.

The use of oaths is not prohibited in the *third commandment*. The name of the Lord cannot be said to be taken *in vain*, when it is used in the support of *Truth*, upon occasions of *Importance*.

Secondly, Nor is there any thing like such a prohibition in all the *Old Testament* : though it is certain, that oaths were in use among other nations, and among the Jews, both before the giving of the Law, and under it.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, On the contrary, there are many *examples* recorded in the book of Genesis, and other parts of scripture, of the best men, who made use of oaths, or exacted them of others; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and many more.

SERM.

V.

Besides example, we meet with *directions* and precepts relative to the use of oaths, together with other marks of the approbation of them. *If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath, to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word: he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.—Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.—Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life—he that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not.—Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—He that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.—If thou wilt return, O*

Numb. xxx.
2.
Deut. vi.
13.
Ps. xv.
Isa. lxxv. 16.
Jer. iv. 1,
2.

SERM.

V.

2 Chron.
xv. 14, 15.

Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me — and thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness. — And they swore unto the Lord with a loud voice — and all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire: and he was found of them; and the Lord gave them rest round about.

An oath indeed is justly considered as an act of Religion.

First, It is an acknowledgment of the power and *divinity* of the Being we invoke.

Secondly, It is an acknowledgment of his moral attributes, and *providence*; that he is a lover of truth and justice, that he marks our actions, and will call us to account for them.

Thirdly, It is an acknowledgment of this, made in a *publick manner*, before many

many witnesses, and with great solemnity. Oaths therefore are useful; or may be so, if the fault be not in ourselves; both by impressing sentiments of Religion, and by strengthening the fidelity, and mutual confidence of men in each other; and this in cases sometimes, to which no other bonds, but these of Religion and conscience can reach; in contracts of the very highest importance, among private persons, and between princes and kingdoms. Had our Lord designed to put an end to all oaths absolutely, would He not have forbidden us to swear by Almighty God himself? Of this oath He is silent. *I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other such like, vain, fantastic, absurd oath.*

SERM.

V.

The Apostle Paul, who surely understood our Lord's intention on this subject, scruples not even in his epistles to the Christian churches, to confirm his assertions by oaths.—*God is my witness, whom I serve in the gospel of his son.*—*Now the things*

Rom. i. 9,

Gal. i. 20,

SERM. *things which I write unto you, behold, be-
V. fore God, I lie not. * The God and Father*

* 2 Cor. xi.
21.

*of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed
for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. You
see, the Apostle Paul makes use of oaths,
both in effect, and in very exprefs terms :
Not indeed, by heaven, nor by the earth,
nor any other such like oath : he seeks no
such vain subterfuges against profaneness
or perjury ; but swears, as he lived, in sim-
2 Cor. i. 12. plicity as well as sincerity, by the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, than
which a more awful name is not to be ut-
tered by the voice of man.*

1 Cor. iii.
5.

*But who is Paul, or who is Apollos ?
That very God and Father of our Lord
hath strengthened his own promises, to
those that trust in him, by the confirma-
tion of an oath. Be it, that the use of
oaths is founded upon the corruption of
our nature, upon our falsehood and insta-
bility ; the Almighty, at least, is free
from this suspicion : He is not to be
charged with insincerity. Yet God, wil-
ling*

Heb. vi.
17.

All Oaths are not unlawful.

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V.

ling more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, that is, his immutable counsel, and inviolable oath, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

But if, in imitation of the plain example of the Supreme Being himself, and in opposition, as we think, to none of his commands, in causes of importance, for the sake of truth, in support of justice, at the call of charity, we engage our religion as well as honour, and submit to be bound by this accumulated obligation; let us not forget to imitate the same perfect pattern in that *fidelity* also and *truth*, which may render the assistance of *oaths* as little necessary as possible. This at least we may do safely; without danger of offending God, and without censure from any sect of Christians. Whether it be *lawful*

to

SERM.

v.

to swear, or not; it is certainly *a duty* to speak truth, and to act honestly. The controversy concerning oaths would come to a very desirable end, if all parties would but draw this conclusion from it.

However we may differ from those who scruple the use of oaths, we must agree with them in this; that the most certain and unexceptionable way of *gaining credit* is always to *Speak Truth*. And if *they* be careful to give us this security to rely upon, we have not much reason to complain of the exchange. Their *practice* will be the best *vindication* of their professions. Though we do right, on our part, to *be fully persuaded in our own mind*; we may well permit *them* to plead *conscience*, who can give the most inviolable *fidelity* for a proof of their conscientiousness: let them freely enjoy any distinction or privilege, so long as they never use it for a *cloke of maliciousness*, or of *fraud*.

Rom. xiv.
5, 22.

2 Pet. ii.
16.

And

All Oaths are not unlawful.

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V.

And persons of all persuasions on this subject, or on any other, may do well to reflect, that God is witness of every thing. Whether we invoke him or not, still he is present. Though we cautiously decline the *use* of his holy *name*, and substitute some object of less veneration in his place; or if we trifle with him by *mental reservations*, or by putting to words a sense of our own, different from that which is acknowledged and understood; or if we *refuse* to *swear* at all from pretended or real scruples; all these evasive expedients will be found insufficient to screen our insincerity from his resentment. *Falsehood* is offensive to him, as certainly as Perjury.

Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.

The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips.

Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?

—even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart; he that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour. He that swear-

eth

Prov. xii.

22.

Pf. xii. 3.

Pf. xv. 1, 2,
&c.

SERM. *eth unto his neighbour, or if he have not*
V. *sworn unto him, disappointeth him not,*

though it were to his own hindrance. Whoso
doteh these things shall never fall.

S E R M O N VI.

THIRD COMMANDMENT. PART II.

EXOD. xx. 7.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF
THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, FOR
THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM
GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME
IN VAIN.

IF we undertake to treat of oaths, it is proper, no doubt, impartially to represent, both how far they may be allowed; and in the cases where they are not allowable, how greatly they ought to be condemned. The former, however, of these two points is not generally so seasonable, nor so important as the latter. Scruples are not so common as profaneness, nor by any means so detrimental: and to almost every congregation of christians

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christians the best and most useful discourse concerning oaths is that, I fear, which brings the best and strongest arguments *against* them.

But indeed, when we maintain that oaths are properly acts of religion towards God, and adapted to promote truth and confidence among men, we are so far from giving encouragement to the practice of common swearing, that, in all just estimation, we plead strongly on the other side. For this profane abuse of oaths plainly tends to degrade the dignity, and destroy the usefulness of all oaths whatever. There is not a moment's interval between familiarity and contempt. What wonder, if thus prostituted, they meet with little reverence on the most awful occasions?

Were they not capable of being applied to any useful purpose, it would be but a *single* crime to do hurt with them: whereas now we are answerable, not only for the

the mischief we occasion, but the want of all the good which we prevent. Out of our own mouths we are condemned: and profane swearing is more criminal in *us*, than it would be in one of those persons, who are persuaded, that oaths are in all cases unnecessary, and absolutely and utterly forbidden.

Yet the people of that persuasion, to do them justice, in this respect are very little guilty. It is rarely that you shall find any of that sect, who maintain that even serious oaths are not allowable, falling into profane. Their opinion therefore, however mistaken, yet at least may be borne with; and a practice so conformable to it, lays claim to our commendation. Whereas we, by a conduct inconsistent with any principles, and *doubly* wrong upon our own, do evil with the means of good, and profane what we pretend to hold sacred.

Is it not surprising, that a practice so

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contrary

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contrary to religion, and detrimental to society, should have abounded so much as this hath done, in almost all kingdoms and ages? Though it is indeed still too common among us; we have no reason to complain that it is more so, than in former times, or foreign countries.

The Greek and Latin nations were far from being faultless in this respect; nor did they confine themselves to any one form of swearing, or one object. They had a multitude of Divinities, adapted each to a different purpose: but every one of them ready to lend his name, as it might be most suitable to the inclination of the person disposed to make this bad use of it.

Whether the inhabitants of the British Island were formerly deficient in this article of vice, or whatever might be the reason, our Norman conquerors, we are told, brought over with them a great stock. And several of the Monarchs of
that

that formidable race made themselves remarkable, as for their other great exploits, so each of them for a particular mode of common swearing, of which he was pleased to set an example, and to become the professed protector and patron. Some few of these select forms have had the fortune to survive even to this day; but meet with no respect now, like other favourites without merit, when their masters are no more.

The ancient Roman Emperors being far greater than ordinary Kings, took upon them proportionably greater state even in this ceremony of oaths. For though they might themselves condescend, on occasion, to invoke Jupiter, or Hercules, or any other Deity, whom they were pleased to honour with their notice; they required their subjects and slaves to offer incense to the Emperor's own image, and to swear by his name.

In short, the custom of profane swear-

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ing has overspread the world. And yet this single plea of custom is all that can be alleged in it's excuse; while there is such a Multitude of the justest reasons that condemn it.

Passing by the Idolatry there would be in swearing by false Gods, with any real respect to their authority, and the Absurdity and Impiety united in the invocation of empty names; let us suppose the offence in question to consist in calling upon the Supreme Being in a form of words appropriated to swearing, yet without any particular intention at the time seriously to request his interposition; but merely to signify, that we are angry perhaps, or perhaps merry; that we are somewhat surpris'd, or scarcely sober; that we are very positive, or willing to be thought witty; or perhaps without any intention or meaning whatever.

And where is the mighty harm, it may be said, since it is all in sport?

Sport!

Sport! with whom? The Creator and Lord of the Universe? before whom the highest orders of celestial Beings fall down, and worship? whom no man can see and live? Is He a subject for sport?

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Or were He less great; consider, He is *your* Creator and Lord. You *live, and move, and have your being in Him*. He made you what you are: He gives you all you have: *He taketh away your breath, you die, and are turned again to your dust*. Nay, *can destroy both body and soul in hell*. Is He a subject for sport? He gave his own, and only begotten son to suffer death, to be crucified for your sins: Is He a subject of sport?

Acts xvii.
28.

Pf. civ. 29.

Matt. x. 28.

As to religious matters, you have nothing to do with them. Are you sure of that? Can you demonstrate then, that there is no God who made you? No Saviour to judge you? You know at least that you must die: what if you should

SERM. then find, that you have been mistaken?
 VI. will you stand such a hazard for sport?

Matt. xvi.
 26.

Undertake some bold profitable perjury. True wisdom indeed will condemn your conduct still. Alas! *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* But you will be able to reflect, that you had before your eyes, when you went astray, the appearance of advantage; and were undone for what you once hoped might have been useful.

You look for no benefit from this vice: do you receive any *pleasure* from it? It is wrong, you must confess; but so delightful and sweet perhaps, that you know not how to abstain. Possibly you have often resolved against it, but through the imbecility of human nature, to no purpose; relapsing continually and almost unavoidably into a practice, which makes the whole comfort and satisfaction of your life.

You

You must know your own comforts best. If you assert, that swearing is so prodigiously pleasing, who shall take upon him to contradict you? Only it will be a mystery, of which we cannot have any comprehension.

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When a *glutton*, or a *drunkard* pleads the delight he takes in his intemperance; we understand that the appetites of *hunger* and *thirst*, which are necessary to our subsistence, and to the gratification of which there is naturally annexed some degree of pleasure, have been so enlarged by excess, and perverted by abuse, that the poor Man finds a real difficulty in refraining from the excesses that destroy him.

The most intemperate *rage*, however dangerous and criminal, is but the extreme of the passion of *anger*; the satisfaction of which is the removal of a present pain, and the ultimate end of it, *self defence*.

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It might puzzle a Philosopher to trace the *love of swearing* to it's original principle, and assign it's place in the constitution of man.

Is it a passion, or an appetite, or an instinct? What is it's just measure, it's proper object, it's ultimate end?

Or shall we conclude that it is entirely the work of art? a vice, which men have invented for themselves without prospect of pleasure or profit, and to which there is no imaginable temptation in nature?

Can any thing further be thought of in it's defence? Is it an *honour* to swear? There are indeed some persons, if we may judge by the self-complacency apparent in their air and manner, who are so far mistaken, as to fancy that this vice is an improvement of discourse, giving a spirit, a kind of high relish to their sentiments; and accordingly they
serve

serve it up to you, on every occasion, and mix it with all their remarks. Indeed it takes upon itself sometimes to be more than a mere ornament in conversation, and becomes the most considerable part of what people have to offer. You find, if you reflect on what they have said, that the *oath* is the whole substance of the observation.

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If it be an accomplishment, it is such a one as the meanest person may make himself master of; requiring neither rank nor fortune, neither genius nor learning.

But if it be no test of wit; we must allow perhaps that it wears the appearance of *valour*. Alas! what is the *appearance* of any thing? The little birds perch upon the image of an Eagle.

True Bravery is sedate, and inoffensive: if it refuse to submit to insults, it offers none; begins no disputes, enters into no needless quarrels; is above the little, trouble-

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troublesome ambition to be distinguished every moment: it hears in silence, and replies with modesty; fearing no enemy, and making none; and is as much ashamed of insolence as of cowardice.

Lastly, the vice of common swearing is prohibited by the laws of God and man.

It is an open violation of your country's laws, enacted by the highest authority in this nation, both wisely and justly, with a view to the publick good: nor can you, so long as you continue notoriously guilty in this respect, lay claim to the title of a *good citizen*.

That of a *good christian* perhaps you are not ambitious of obtaining: Or else, what further occasion is there for words or arguments? Profane swearing is displeasing to Almighty God; it is forbidden, and will be punished by him. *I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth,*
for

Matt. v. 34,
35, 37.

for it is his footstool: but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: the threatening follows; the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. There is more intended than expressed; the meaning is, he will severely punish him. The Lord will not hold him guiltless: *He* will take this cause into his own hands; being particularly, and, as it were, *personally* concerned in it.

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The penalties appointed by human laws are not always inflicted; and in the case before us very rarely. Of a thousand offenders, is there one brought before the magistrate? Or he, for one of his offences in a thousand?

But the Divine Lawgiver, and Judge, who has annexed a peculiar threatening to this commandment, is Himself, we should consider, a witness too of every violation

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Exod.
xxxiv. 7.

violation of it. He bears indeed with our offences; yet he notes them: and though He be long suffering; He is also true and just, and will *by no means clear the guilty.*

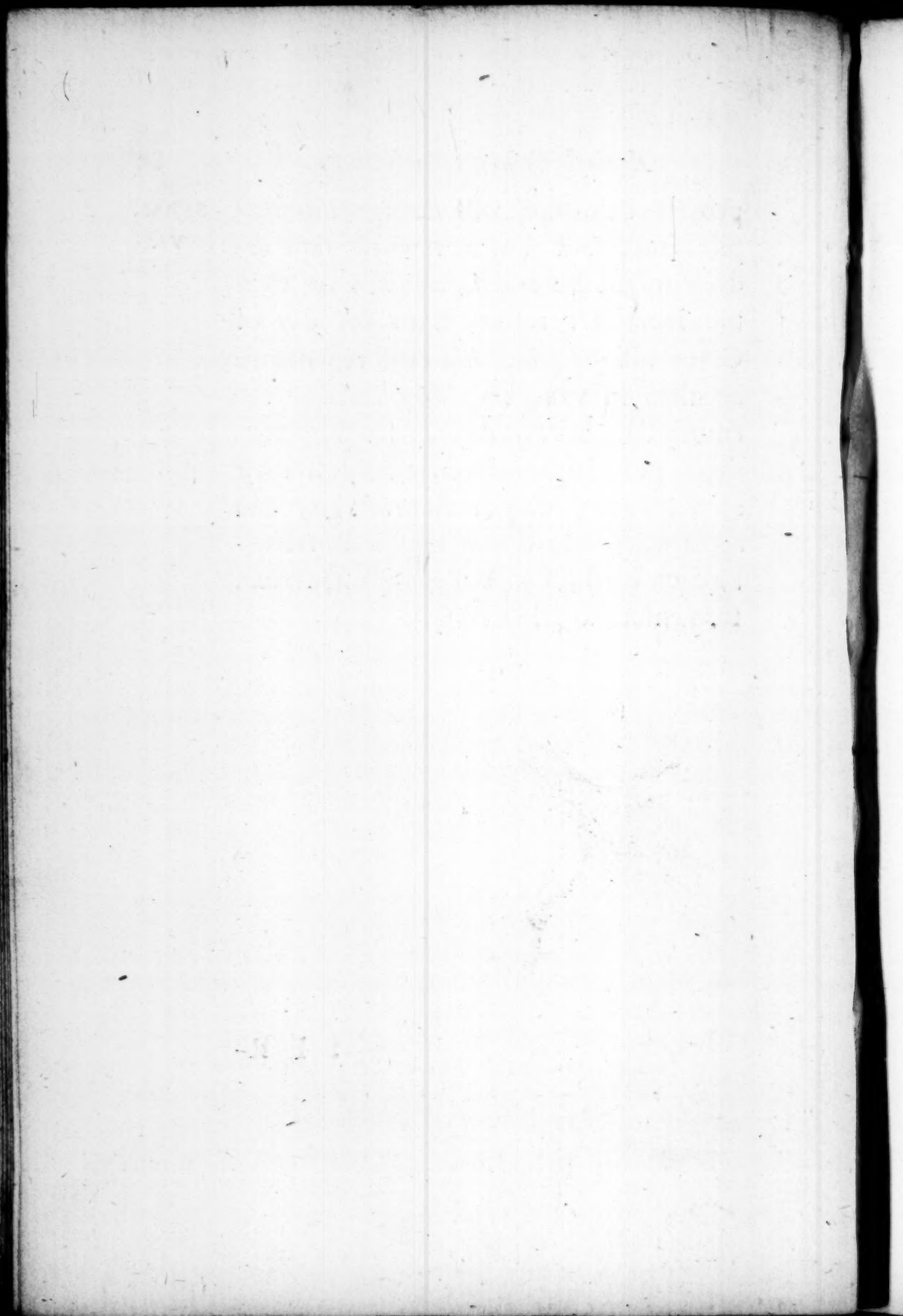
His sentence is not executed speedily; and may indeed, by timely repentance, be prevented: without this, the stroke, however slow, is inevitable. Delay is no security. On the contrary, the longer the Divine Patience spares us, so much the more heinous is our guilt, if we repent not; and the heavier must be our punishment. However free we may be from the dread of any human tribunal; however the Divine vengeance may slumber for a season; it is impossible for us to escape, since He who cannot lie hath said, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

The time will come, when impious mirth will be turned into mourning; the laughter of scoffers into tears. Their
profane

profane oaths they will change into supplications, and prayers: which now indeed might be heard, but will be then too late. Or rather, since the day of Grace will be past, and even repentance be then in vain, they may *continue* the course they have now chosen: imprecations and blasphemies may be still their employment; despair their refuge; and accursed spirits, whom they have resembled on earth, be their companions and tormentors to all eternity.

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S E R M O N VII.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 8.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP
IT HOLY.

THE prodigious solemnity with
which the *ten commandments* were
delivered, from a mountain burning with
fire, by the voice of God, gave them a
distinction above the rest of the Law of
Moses; though it was all derived from
one fountain of wisdom, and enjoined by
the self-same authority. The people of
the Jews could not but pay a peculiar
respect to precepts, uttered by the Al-
mighty himself in their own ears: and
their posterity, and all men indeed, must
be led to think, that these laws were not
selected from the rest, and accompanied
with such marks of honour, without some
superiour

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superiour merit; but the observance of them must be either more eminently acceptable to the Supreme Lawgiver, or, which is in reality the same, more necessary for the good of men.

The *subject matter* of these commands appears also upon examination to be answerable to such expectations. They contain the great principles of human duty, the fundamental rules of religion and morality. Besides the great authority impressed on them, there is an original, intrinsic value in all the laws which have found a place in that *literally Divine composition, of which the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God.*

Exod. xxxii.
16.

If there be any objection to this observation; any precept among this chosen number, that in it's own nature is not essential to religion and virtue, but owes all it's obligation to the revealed will of the Lawgiver, it is this, *Remember that thou*

The Precept of the Sabbath considered.

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thou keep holy the sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

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In the strictness, in which this precept was enjoined to the Jews, it is to be considered as making a part of their ritual law, and expiring with the commencement of Christianity.

Amongst all the discourses of our Lord, and all the writings of his Apostles, in which the duties of men are raised to the highest pitch, and pressed with the greatest earnestness; there is not to be found *one word* to recommend the strict, or indeed *any* observance of the Sabbath. Can it be ranked among the duties of Christians?

Be it, that a regular system of virtues is not designed to be drawn up in the New Testament; and that the Jews, in those days at least, were sufficiently observant of the Sabbath: can we suppose that the

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Gentile

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Gentile converts, to whom so many of the Epistles are addressed, had been every where so well instructed in this duty, if it was a duty to them; and so thoroughly accustomed to the practice of it, as to stand in no further need of information or counsel?

Secondly, Several of the miracles and discourses of our Lord tended plainly to diminish the veneration for the Sabbath; and, as it may be thought, to *prepare* the minds of men for the *abolition* or alteration of it. The Jews indeed were superstitious; to heal the sick on *any* day, could never be a violation of a law of God: and it was a sufficient answer to such as thought otherwise, *that the Sabbath was made for man.*

Mark ii.
27.

John v. 8.

Jer. xvii.
21.

But our Lord did more than this. He commanded one person, whom he had just enabled to walk, to carry his bed along with him on that day; though it was expressly written in the prophet, that

no

The Precept of the Sabbath considered.

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no burden should be borne upon the Sabbath. * And when the Pharisees found fault with his disciples for rubbing the ears of corn, he vindicates them by comparing the law of the Sabbath, to the Levitical rules concerning the *shew-bread*, and *sacrifice*. He represents some of the ceremonies attending their temple-worship, and the rite of circumcision, as properly and reasonably taking place of the respect due to the Sabbath, and excusing the profanation of it: and adds, *In this place is one greater than the Temple: The son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day*: plainly declaring, that he had power to alter these legal institutions; and intimating also perhaps, that he intended to use it.

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* Matt. xii.
1, &c.

But that the Jewish Sabbath is not now binding to Christians, appears no where so plainly as in the *Epistles* of St. Paul.

Now after that ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly ele-

Gal. iv. 9,
10, 11.

G 2

ments,

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Colof. ii.
14, 16.

ments, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. And if you doubt what are the times and days he speaks of in a manner so disparaging, hear him again: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, nailing it to his cross.—Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.

Behold the great Apostle asserting the liberties of mankind, with an earnestness suitable alike to the strength of his genius, and the importance of his subject! as if he had said,

Gal. iii. 10.
Gal. iii. 22.
Rom. iii.
19.

“ These ritual ordinances were a burden upon us doubly grievous: the observance of them was slavery, and disobedience death. A law so voluminous and rigorous, must *conclude all under sin*, and be alike fatal to every man living; set
up,

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up, like the hand writing upon the wall against the profane King, as it were on purpose to pronounce over our head the sentence of condemnation. But thanks be to God in Jesus Christ, it is at length extinct; dead in his death, never to revive more. Call us to no account henceforth on this antiquated subject, nor presume to name to men the children's toys.

We can yield to no intreaties, no authority, not even of the *very chiefest of the Apostles*, in this capital cause; but stand fast in our freedom, and refuse utterly to wear again the yoke of bondage. The Jewish distinction of meats and days is at an end. *To the pure all things are pure.* 2 Cor. xi 5. Tit. i. 15.

Christians keep a continual festival of obedience and thanksgiving: God has granted us here a more valuable *rest*, from the ceremonies of the Law, and the servitude of sin; and has prepared for us an everlasting *Sabbath*, which we shall celebrate with the saints and angels, and with himself in heaven."

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Rom. xiv.
5, 6.

If, after all, some of the first converts to Christianity among the Jews, could not conquer all their prejudices at once, but had still a leaning towards the Law; like the nation that, impatient of freedom, petitioned in form to be again slaves; the Apostle, for themselves, has condescended to their request: *One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike*—He has consented, that they might be left to their own choice: *and regard the day to the Lord; or not regard it, and that also to the Lord*; with the same sincere intention to please and honour him, and with the very same success.

1 Cor. viii.
I.
Heb. v. 14.

Weak and scrupulous minds might be allowed to satisfy themselves, by retaining these remnants of the religion of times past; and the God of the spirits of all flesh would behold their mistake with pity, and their sincerity with approbation: but persons of more *knowledge*, and a *maturer age* in Christ, would easily perceive that they were set at liberty from such ceremonies,

The Precept of the Sabbath considered.

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remonies, and would be thankful for it ; finding them now insipid, and being desirous of stronger food, of spiritual doctrines, and a more reasonable service ; a worship, which they might be allowed to perform *within the Veil*, approaching nearer to God's presence, illuminated more fully by the Spirit, and partakers even of his *Divine Nature*.

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Heb. vi. 19.

2 Pet. i. 4.

But though the *Sabbath*, in all its strictness, was a ritual institution, a *sign*, as it is written, between Almighty God and the children of Israel ; the *seventh day* was *sanctified* from the beginning of the world.

Exod. xxxi.

17.
Ezek. xx.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made : and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it : because that in it, he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

Gen. ii. 1,
2, 3.

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How pleasing is it to observe the divine simplicity of the most ancient, and yet unequalled historian! that perfect propriety, which is the genuine mark of Truth and Nature, and which Art cannot reach! *And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.* This is all. Nothing more, you see, was originally enjoined to man than this, that he should esteem the seventh day *blessed and sanctified*. Not a word is added; not even that he ought to *rest* from his labour on that day; though this is a circumstance, to which the historian's attention, one would think, should have been naturally led, by the reason which he himself adds: *God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.*

When the precept was afterwards delivered to the Jews, it is expressed very differently: *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,*

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God. *In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.* SERM.
VII.

Here you observe, the seventh day is styled a *Sabbath*: and this Idea of rest from labour swallows up every other consideration, and engrosses the commandment.

Whatever honour God commands to be paid to himself, it is all required for the sake of the worshipper. Rest was now become a relief necessary to fallen man, condemned to *eat bread in the sweat of his face.* Gen. iii. 19.

But when the seventh day was first *blessed and sanctified*, he was not yet driven *forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken; nor that ground yet cursed, to bring forth thorns and thistles* to him. His daily task was pleasure; exceeded only by the joy he felt at the weekly return of his thank-givings, Gen. iii. 23, 18.

Happy

SERM. Happy state of innocence and ease,
VII. from which we fell in Adam !

I Cor. xv. But, *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ*
22. *shall all be made alive. There remaineth*
Heb. iv. 9. *yet a rest for the people of God.*

Heb. iv. 11. This life is to us the *six days of labour*,
and Heaven our everlasting *Sabbath*. *Let*
us labour therefore to enter into that rest.

Driven out from the seat of bliss by
cherubims and a flaming sword, con-
demned to struggle through the thorny
wilderness of this world, and eat our bread
Gen. iii. 17. *in sorrow till we return to dust*, we yet
19. look for a *better country, that is an hea-*
Heb. xi. 16. *venly* ; a happier Eden, gained by the se-
cond Adam, and to be lost no more. *To*
Rev. ii. 7. *him that overcometh will I give to eat of*
the tree of life, which is in the midst of the
Paradise of God.

S E R M O N V I I I .

FOURTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

R E V. i. 10.

I WAS IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY.

W H A T E V E R be our opinion concerning the *Sabbath*, suppose we were never bound to keep it, or are set free from it ever so fully ; we may still be subject to another appointment of a Nature so far similar, as to contain that which was most valuable in the first. Our *Christian Liberty* surely is not a freedom from the worship of Almighty God ; nor from all external forms appertaining to it: since it cannot well subsist, and cannot at all be publick, without some of them.

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Even we have a *sacrifice* to offer, that of *praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.*

Hebr. xiii.
15.

We

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* Hebr. x.

12.

† Luke xxii.

19.

‡ 1 Cor. xi.

26.

We have that * *one sacrifice, that was offered for sins for ever*, to commemorate, till he come again who offered it: † *This do in remembrance of me.* ‡ *Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

1 Cor. vii.

19.

Mark xvi.

16.

Acts x. 48.

Matth.

xxviii. 19.

Circumcision indeed is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God: yet even Christians have a command, not only to believe, but to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Colos. ii. 16.

In like manner, *although no man may now judge us, in respect of the Sabbath; yet must we be very inattentive to overlook, and highly culpable if we disregard, the great authorities on which the institution of the Lord's day is founded, and the many obligations we are under to the observance of it.*

In the first place, this Festival hath been kept by the whole church of Christ, in all ages: It hath been observed in every nation where the gospel hath been planted,
and

and can be traced up to the first sources of Christianity. Its very *antiquity* must render it venerable. Is it not natural to regard with respect, that which hath received so much honour? Are we not afraid to violate what hath been always held sacred? at least, methinks, till we have well inquired whether the appointment, which has met with so general approbation, were not built on great *authority*, or good *reasons*?

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We shall find, that it was founded upon *both*. There are not wanting passages even in the Scriptures, from which it may be inferred, that the religious celebration of the *Lord's Day* was ordered by the Apostles, and authorised by the miraculous presence of our Lord himself.

The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

John xx.
19.

And

SERM.

VIII.

* John xx.
26.

** And after eight days, again his disciples were within;—then came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.—I need not observe to you, that after eight days, in the language of Scripture, means on the same day of the week following.*

Acts xx.
6, 7.

Not only at Jerusalem; in other parts at a great distance, the first Christians, we find, had soon adopted this holy feast, in imitation of the example, or in conformity to the directions of those who had converted them; and employed it in the celebration of *publick worship*, and in acts of publick charity. *We sailed away from Philippi,—and came unto them to Troas:—and upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.*

1 Cor. xvi.
1, 2.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him

him in store as God hath prospered him ; SERM.
that there be no gathering when I come. VIII.

I John was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. To whatever place the Apostles and first disciples of Christ went, or were driven by their enemies, they carried this rule of their religion along with them, to remember the Christian Sabbath: their Lord, in commemoration of whose resurrection they kept it, continued to follow them with tokens of his approbation and presence; accepting the day, which they had dedicated to him, and had distinguished by his name: *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.*

Rev. i. 9,
10.

Nor is it of no moment, that the observance of the Lord's Day has the sanction of *civil authority*. What though the penalties are not often exacted? Much guilt may be incurred, where there is little danger of punishment.

But

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Rom. xiii. 1.

1 Pet. ii. 13.

But the danger is not little: for to violate the just laws of the *community*, is an offence against *God*, the source of all power, the supreme Head of all magistrates; who is pleased alike, with the right use of the authority he hath delegated, and with a due subjection to it. *Him* at least we cannot offend with impunity: and were it not that the Christian Sabbath claims, as you have seen, an Original higher than human, there could be no instance in which we are more plainly bound to *submit to the ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake*.

The institution of this weekly festival, both as a day of devotion, and of relief from labour, is evidently and greatly *beneficial*.

To what other cause can we ascribe that degree of knowledge and civility found amongst the vulgar? who make the bulk of mankind; and would make a greater, and a much worse part of the world

world than they do, were it not for the observance of this or some such festival.

It is an institution much in favour of the *inferiour* part of our species in another respect also; as it checks that inequality, which is perpetually growing up among men; and which is useful indeed while confined within due bounds, but easily degenerates into Tyranny and Servitude; detrimental to both parties, and to the one surely the greatest calamity on earth.

This day probably preserves *Religion* in the world.

Without the assignment of some particular times either by authority or custom for the worship of God, and the celebration of religious rites, it is not at all incredible that *Christianity* itself, long before our days, and all knowledge, and *thought* even of a *Supreme Being*, might have perished from the face of the earth.

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Duties, which men are left at liberty to discharge at what time they please, soon come to be utterly neglected. Of all those great numbers, who cannot be prevailed on to worship their Creator upon *the solemn day* set apart for that purpose, there are, we apprehend, exceedingly few, who find it more convenient to do it on *any other*.

No. Although we must acknowledge, that our places of public worship are found to contain some perhaps *hypocritical* persons, who aim at no more than the shew of piety; crowds of *thoughtless* people, who come without any the least design relative to piety; no small number of *lukewarm* and irresolute christians, whose lives fall short not only of their professions, but of their own wishes and intentions: and in general too many wicked persons of every class; who join no devotion to their prayers, or no virtue to their devotion: yet, though multitudes of *bad* men be in the church, the *good* are *all* there.

there. Rarely is it found, that those who give not this specimen of their piety, either shew their *religion* in other instances, or an eminent degree of virtue in *any*. Of all the motives to a good life, none comes up to the fear of God. The *morality*, that is universal and durable, springs from the root of *Religion*.

Possible it is, no doubt, to be too scrupulous in our regard to this or any other of the external forms of piety. But there is a great difference between a freedom from groundless anxiety, and an insensibility to religious impressions. Which latter, whether it be the greater fault or not, appears to be much the more common: and therefore it is more necessary to caution men against it, and to avoid it.

Whatever may be the case in other countries, or may have been even here formerly; in this nation, and in our days, *Superstition*, however bad a thing, is not very terrible. The danger is almost

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wholly from *Irreligion*. There are vast numbers who absent themselves from the public worship without any reason, for one who has good reason to be absent, and yet attends it. Generally, when we neglect the Lord's Day, it is owing to some little call of business, or pleasure, or perhaps to mere indolence; and not to the greater respect we have for any superiour duties. These can be our excuse only when we are employed in them.

Matth. ix.
13.

What is it to us, that God *will have mercy rather than sacrifice*, when we give him neither?

Exact rules cannot be laid down concerning this, or many other things, so as to include all persons and cases.

I cannot presume to prescribe to another person, what *sum* of money he shall give away in charity, or what *persons* in particular he must make the objects of it: yet *alms-giving* is nevertheless a necessary duty; and, as we may see by our
Lord's

Lord's account of the last Judgment, it will be fatal to have neglected it.

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It will be hardly said to me, that I am obliged to attend the public worship of God, every time when it is *possible*; or even always when I might do it without very considerable inconvenience. It must be left to myself to be the judge: and it may be difficult to censure me safely in any particular instance. And yet surely I may make myself highly culpable upon the whole. A *total* neglect is scarce consistent with the bare *profession* of Christianity; and a backwardness in this attendance is a sign of a cold regard to its interests, and a slender proficiency in its power and spirit.

Who will presume to specify what exercises, visits, occupations, except those prohibited by law, are inconsistent with the decent, godly, and reasonable observance of the Lord's Day; or how great a portion of it every Christian is bound to

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consecrate to acts of piety, and employ in the public or private duties of Religion? The determination, if it were made, would not be the same for all, nor for the same person upon all occasions. And in any instance it would allow some latitude.

What may we hence infer? that there is nothing wrong? that we are at full liberty, with respect to this branch of our conduct, to act just as we shall think fit, or rather, as we may *fancy*? That engagements, at the best of no use, and amusements hardly innocent upon any day, may yet engross and fill that time, which by the laws and customs of our country, and by the practice and injunctions of the christian church, in all nations, and from the first ages of it, has been set apart, for the purposes of cultivating piety, and giving honour to Almighty God? If the Scriptures were silent; if there were no traces of this custom in the practice of the Apostles, who indeed gave *all* their time to Religion,

gion, and * *continued daily with one accord in the temple*; I had almost added, if there were no Revealed Religion upon earth, this day is now, by so many reasons, so long a prescription, and for such important purposes, appropriated and consecrated to God, that it is a *sacrilege* to *profane* it.

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VIII.

* Acts ii.
46.

Let me just add, that to the inferiour part of mankind this institution of the Lord's Day, though intended even chiefly for *their* advantage, is most dangerous. In this it but resembles many other means of grace, which being misapplied, become pernicious. Some rich men, it is probable, had been happier if they had been born to labour: and the poor sometimes find reason to wish, they had had *no day* at their own disposal. Brought to the most deplorable end, and become examples, and a spectacle for the good only of others, they have been heard to acknowledge, with their dying breath, that their first engagements in iniquity

SERM. were contracted at a time when they
VIII. were, too much, alas! for them, their

own Masters on the Lord's Day: they
were corrupted, and undone by the abuse
of God's mercy, and the very means
which he had appointed for their amend-
ment and salvation,

S E R.

S E R M O N IX.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 12.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER: THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.

THERE is some diversity, it seems, in the arrangement of the commandments. They are divided into *ten* after a different manner by *Catholics* and *Protestants*; and distributed differently into *two tables* by *Jews* and *Christians*. The order also of some of them is a little altered in the old Greek translation. But in every distribution and division, among the persons of all persuasions, and in all languages, the precept now before us, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, is always ranked immediately after those, which

SERM.
IX.

The 6th,
7th, 8th, in
the Septua-
gint.

SERM.

IX.

which set forth our duty to Almighty God. The order in this instance is so natural and undeniable, that neither design, nor accident has ever disturbed it. After that entire and boundless obedience and veneration due from all to God, the next degree of respect and reverence is that due from children to their parents.

The relation between the Creator and his creatures admits, in strictness, of no comparison; yet when He is pleased to represent himself to us under notions accommodated to our capacity, there is not any character He assumes more frequently or willingly, than this of a *parent*. No resemblance can exactly set before us his nature or operations, what He is in himself, or what He is to us; but this, we may presume, has in it the least impropriety. He not only condescends to take the title, but claims, and as it were glories in it; calling at the same time for all those sentiments and returns from us, which are suitable to that relation.

— One

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III

—*One God and Father of all.—†God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.—‡ We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits?—A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour?

SERM,
IX.

*Eph. iv. 6.
†1 Cor. viii.
6.
‡Heb. xii. 9.
Mal. i. 6.

What great respect must be due from us to that character, which the Supreme Nature has chosen to be the representation of his own! The authority of a father can be seen in no fairer view, than by this reflected light. When you look on the parental power, you behold the image of the *divine*.

Not that we are obliged to have recourse to *metaphors*, and oblique arguments, on this subject. The duty of children towards their parents is bound upon them by the most immediate and obvious,

SERM. obvious, as well as the most powerful
IX. and indispensable obligations.

In the first place, here is the *command* of Almighty God : *Honour thy father and thy mother.* What need of reasoning to evince our obligation ? or what room for evasion, if we could be willing to disown it ?

Secondly, the command is *express*. What we are to do in the other instances, is left to be inferred : and in direct terms we are only warned to avoid that which is wrong. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.—* And even the fourth commandment wears the same form of prohibition. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.—How ? in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter.—* And so throughout the other table. In this instance alone, not content with his usual style,

style, the divine Lawgiver has added force to the precept, by a manner of speaking more cogent, and positive: *Honour thy father and thy mother.* Neglect in this case is against the very letter of the law; And he who does not *exert* himself in the keeping of this commandment, breaks it.

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It is repeated also, and enforced in the *New Testament. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.* Our Saviour has shewn great respect to this commandment, not only by observing it, being subject to his parents, the one of them only so *called*, and the other honoured above all human creatures in *being* so; but also restoring it, when it was degraded, to its proper rank, and declaring it to be indispensable. Alms to the poor, no doubt, are good; the support of God's temple and worship was certainly acceptable to Him: but even such valuable things as these, he has taught us, are to give place to others yet
more

Colof. iii.
10.

SERM. more necessary. * *God commanded, saying,*
 IX. *Honour thy father and mother : but ye say,*

**Matt. xv.*
 4, 5, 6,

whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ; that is, I have given to God what might have relieved my parents ; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Acts of charity and devotion are not well timed, when they obstruct us in this duty. God will accept of nothing, till we have paid this necessary debt at home : and when we divert even to sacred uses what is required for the relief and comfort of a parent in want, the holy treasury is defiled by our gifts, and loaths the offensive offering.

But though Almighty God will not allow any honour offered to himself to excuse the neglect of our parents ; yet our kindness to them, will stand us in great stead, when He calls us to account for our forgetfulness of *Him* ; and visits

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us for our transgressions. * *Hear me your father, O children, and do thereafter that ye may be safe. For the Lord hath given the Father honour over the children, and hath confirmed the authority of the mother over the sons. Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins: and he that honoureth his mother, is as one that layeth up treasure.—My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him; and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten:—in the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered; thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fair warm weather.*

SERM.

IX.

* Eccl. iii.

But we are not left to rely wholly on the authority of the Son of *Sirach*, or of any man; God himself in the express words of this commandment has been pleased to promise, that he will bless those that keep it; and this in a manner peculiar

SERM.

IX.

Deut. v. 33.

liar and remarkable. *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* The long and happy possession of the land of Canaan, was the reward proposed to the Jews for the keeping of all God's commandments. *You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you; that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.* And yet in the solemn delivery of the ten Commandments, the reward is not subjoined to the whole; but annexed, it seems, to *one* distinguished precept; as if respect to this one of the divine laws had a superior efficacy in drawing down that blessing, which indeed was only due to the observance of all.

Nor is this reward a consideration of no weight even to *Christians*.

First, Children that obey their parents are the most likely to do well and prosper,
to

to live long and happily, according to the *natural course* of things. The whole of life is apt to take it's colour from the employment of our youth; and that employment of it which is the most agreeable to our parents, will commonly be most to our advantage.

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Secondly, St. Paul alleges as obligatory and yet in force this very commandment, with the *promise* annexed to it. *Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth.*—Dutiful children may yet hope for the blessing of God even in this life: he still interposes in favour of those who are obedient to this commandment.

Ephes. vi.
2, 3.

Thirdly, Or suppose the rewards offered to Christians were only the blessings of the *world to come*; the promise here subjoined to this commandment may still be made use of, and applied with great

VOL. II. I justness

SERM. justness for their encouragement. Is it of
 IX. no consequence, to know what virtues are
 most acceptable in the sight of God, be-
 cause He reserves his recompence to the
 day of Judgment? If obedience to pa-
 rents was entitled to an eminent share
 of God's favour, when the tokens of it
 were temporal; may we not trust, that
 he still views this amiable virtue with the
 same eye; and will distinguish it in a pro-
 portionable degree, but with much greater
 honour, when he makes us citizens of
 the new *Jerusalem*, and receives us into
everlasting habitations?

Lastly, As the willing observance of
 this law is peculiarly pleasing to Al-
 mighty God, so the violation of it is emi-
 nently offensive to Him, and will be at-
 tended or followed by an exemplary ven-
 geance.

According to the Law of Moses, to
 which our Saviour refers us, a signal out-
 rage against parents was capital. God
 commanded,

Matt. xv.
 4.

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*commanded, saying, *Honour thy father and mother: and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

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IX.

*Exod. xxi.

17.

Deut. xxi.

18, &c.

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them;—all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

Just so in the case of idolatry and blasphemy. If there be found among you man or woman, that hath gone and served other Gods, and worshipped them—thou shalt stone them with stones, till they die: so thou shalt put the evil away from among you. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him.

Deut. xvii.

2, &c.

Levit. xxiv.

16.

And no wonder that the punishment is the same, when the offences are so much

SERM. alike. **He that forsaketh his father is as a*
 IX. blasphemer.

*Ecclus. iii.
 16.

2 Tim. iii.
 2.

St. Paul too seems to acknowledge the affinity between these two vices by his arrangement of the offenders, *blasphemers, disobedient to Parents.*

PROV. XXX.
 17.

Is there need of more? The command is exprefs; the sanction great, on both sides; the reward distinguished; the condemnation dreadful, and yet equitable: The conscience even of the transgressor cannot but approve of it. He that is hard-hearted to him that begat, and her that bare him, to whom will he be good? What crimes will he not in time commit, who begins with this? and what punishment may he not grow up to suffer? *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*

And

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And in fact, what confession is more just, or indeed more frequent, in those who are brought to an ignominious end, than this, that they begun their course of iniquity *at home*, in an obstinate ungovernable disposition, and disobedience to their parents? The progress after this was natural, through every vice to that fatal crime to be now expiated; and yet perhaps not expiated, even by their blood; through every danger to this awful moment, when they find Almighty God faithful at least in his threatenings. They are snatched away in the midst, in the beginning often of their days; gathering thus the first bitter fruits of disobedience, and looking for the full vintage hereafter in *eternal death*.

S E R M O N X.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

EPHES. vi. 1.

CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE
LORD; FOR THIS IS RIGHT.

AS the duty of children to parents is SERM.
enjoined in the clearest manner, X.
and under the strongest sanctions by the
Law of God; so it is also required by,
what is indeed the Law of God too, the
voice of *Nature, Reason, and Humanity.*

You observe how the young of *Animals* appear to be committed by *Nature* to the care and protection of their parents: They have continual recourse to them in their wants and fears, and conform instantly to every intimation of such lawful guides and governours. The pa-
I 4 rents

SERM. rents accordingly, on the other hand,
X. are in a most wonderful manner both
— disposed to undertake this trust, and enabled to execute it.

These ties, we see, are first formed by the hand of nature: and the child, that endeavours to break loose from this regular dependance and subjection, opposes the order instituted by providence, and the course of things. He can find no example in any other species, to countenance his unnatural wilfulness; and the voice of every creature upon earth cries out against him, and condemns him,

But *Reason* also in the Human species is on the same side, and strengthens the ties of nature. Regard to the publick and our own welfare will prescribe the same conduct, to which we are already prompted by prior motives: nor is this argument above the capacity of those it is addressed to. Even a child may soon perceive so much, that he is not so *wise*
as

as his parents: That if he follow his own fancy in opposition to their judgment, it is very likely, both that he will do mischief, and have cause himself to repent it.

SERM.

X.

For, together with the superiority of their understanding, he will observe also the tenderness of their affection. Their advice, he must soon be sensible, is sincere and honest and disinterested. His other Counsellors, (and his *passions* are to be reckoned among the number,) may be his enemies; and generally they are at best but *their own friends*. But his parents, he may be very sure, will be faithful to him. Their's are the counsels of kindness, and their reproofs the effects, and very often the best tokens of it. There can be no difference between him and them, but about the means: the thing aimed at on both sides is the same; it is his welfare, honour, and happiness. They would be glad to gratify even his humour, but they prefer his lasting good. No other consideration, but the view of
his

SERM.

X.

his advantage, could prevail with them to offend him.

This affection which your parents bear towards you, and the great good they have done you in consequence of it, give them still another title to your consideration and respect, a right to be regarded by you for *their own sake*. And if in some instances you were persuaded, and truly too, that their counsels were not the most advantageous, this would not immediately exempt you from all obligation to comply with them. Gratitude, and some tenderness surely on your part, in return for so much on their's, must be allowed to have weight, and come in to supply the place of more selfish considerations. Must your own satisfaction be the end of all your measures? or rather, cannot you receive satisfaction from the gratification of others? Will it afford you no pleasure, to *give it* to your best friends and greatest benefactors? You may part with something, were it to the mistakes of such persons;

persons; and exchange, with no great loss, your own desires for this pleasure of *pleasing*.

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X.

Conscience, it is acknowledged, you are not to give up to any. Neither Father nor Mother must prevail with you to be wicked, and to disobey your Creator. Nor will they tempt you to do it. The injunctions of Parents are of another Sort, the same with the commands of your heavenly Father; to be good Christians, to be diligent, sober, honest men. Lay aside your apprehensions: I take upon me to be responsible for it, that you will meet with little difficulty on this head; but have full scope to oblige and please both your Father and Mother, without the danger of violating any one of God's commandments.

If the two parents themselves be *divided* in their sentiments, the *preference* is due to him, to whom even the other parent is bound to be subject. But they
are

SERM.

X.

are not apt to be divided, or mistaken in these cases; not in their *advice* to their children, however they may in their *own practice*. Even parents, who cannot prevail upon themselves to be virtuous and good, would yet wish, and will kindly and wisely exhort their children to deserve that character. There is no envy in their hearts: they will be glad to see themselves excelled by you as far as you please: and their advice will be safe, though their example may be dangerous.

Would then the power of parents, but for that one limitation, be absolutely boundless? Is there nothing that can possibly be brought into competition with it, besides the command of Almighty God? Can no *advantage* be so great, no inconvenience so pressing, as to counterbalance it?

Before a child is yet arrived at the age of *discretion*, which he must be content to estimate by the *laws* and customs of his country;

country; while he is in the family, or educated under the direction, and maintained by the substance of his parents, his obedience may be *unreserved*. He can hardly exceed in it. Their authority is then at the highest; and then also of the greatest necessity and use to him.

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X.

Afterwards, and always it will indeed be great, but not *absolute*; and let me have leave to tell you, your reasons and objections, whenever you dispute it, ought to satisfy not only yourselves, but wise and good men, disinterested, without prejudice, and well acquainted with both sides of the question. Otherwise, if you dare not, or if you *do not* advise with these, but think proper to consult your own sense only, the presumption lies against you. Without entering into the particulars, it is probable you are in the wrong. There are a great many instances of undutiful behaviour and blameable disobedience to parents, for one on the other hand, where their authority is patiently

SERM. patiently submitted to, when it ought in
X. reason to be rejected.

The case of all the most perplexing, as well as most frequent, is that of *marriage*.—If it be left to the discretion of every young man himself, as soon as ever he is of the legitimate age, (for till then we can give no ear at all to his pretensions,) that *discretion* may but ill deserve the name. His judgment will be apt to follow the verdict of his inclinations; the Fancy will raise a number of impregnable arguments, yielding to nothing but *Experience*: and this will come too late to be of use to him.—On the other hand, the reasons of convenience, interest, and advancement, by which parents are often determined, though considerable, do not seem to be decisive alone. Even the more important recommendations of character and temper, are yet hardly sufficient, except they receive some enforcement from the useful partiality of *affection*. This indeed may be *excited*, where it is not; and

and such amiable qualities are the most likely to excite it : it may also be *extinguished*, where it is ; and *will* almost certainly for the want of them.

SERM.

X.

So that perhaps no general rule for this case will be binding in every instance. A kind Father will make great *condescensions* ; a prudent child will be *cautious* how far he proceeds in such connections, without the approbation of his parents ; and He is an obedient son indeed, and a pattern of filial duty, who sets the remembrance of benefits past above the expectation of pleasure to come, prefers the comfort and satisfaction of those to whom he has owed so much, before his own most impetuous desires, and gives freely to his *gratitude*, the triumph over his *love*.

The other instances of duty to parents will not be difficult, either to understand, or indeed to practise. The obligation is more evident and indisputable, and the performance easy, and pleasant. A respectful,

SERM.

X.

spectful, and obliging, and kind behaviour towards them upon all *common occasions*, and in the course of your ordinary concerns and conversation, as it is plainly right, so will it be agreeable to the dictates of your own heart. You see it is the least that can be due; and though you pay it, if it be with reluctance, it is some discredit to you.

But there may be two occasions, which however widely different, yet both call for the greatest degrees of this ceremonious attention, and the most studied respect. The *one* is, when some duty to God, or your country, or some private interest, plain, just, and no less important, interferes with your obedience. You are then to soften the asperity of what you *do*, by the gentlest *words*, and by all other honest means. Condescend to *request*, if that will help, even what is most *your own*. Accept as a token of favour what cannot be denied. Disapprove with great civility, or silence. When it is impossible
to

to grant, it may yet not be necessary to refuse. But the practice of this part of your duty will hardly ever be called for, except perhaps sometimes in the case of a Parent's *second marriage*.

SERM.

X.

The *other* occasion, which, as I said, demands from you the greatest tokens of respect and tenderness in your behaviour to your parents, is when they labour under infirmities of body or mind, and in the time of their extreme old age. You will then double all your tender assiduity: you will watch their wishes, prevent their desires, catch every precious opportunity to be grateful with an eager sweet attention; of which you will give them a thousand little inestimable proofs, which words cannot teach; and not to know, is criminal: which require no capacity but that of *feeling*, and are to be understood in the *heart*.

I do not condescend to mention, that they may be in *want*: they must not be

SERM. so, while you have any thing, though it
X. were only *strength* to maintain them by
— your labour.

But however affluent their fortunes, or liberal your supplies, they will always want, in that state of old age and infirmity, an indulgence and care, which wealth cannot procure; and which, if it could, lose all their value when they are purchased. They will look for tokens of your kindness, which cannot be received from other hands. Their child is still the comfort and delight of their dying eyes; and no other object pleasing. You will be ready to answer such demands: your heart will correspond to these calls of nature. You will be proud of the humblest offices, and pleased with the most irksome. They cannot give your patience more exercise, than you have given their's. They will not live to let you clear your obligations. Pay what you can, you will still be debtors. Your felicity must be singular, or their distress,
if

Duty of Children to Parents.

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if you * *recompense them the things that they have done for you.*

SERM.

X.

* Ecclus.
vii. 28.

It is written indeed in history, that one woman, when her aged father was confined in prison, and like to die by famine there, obtained leave of his keepers to visit him once a day, and sustained him with her breast. Filial duty in this instance took the place of parental love, and taught her in his extremity to become a *mother* to him.

One writer seems to intimate, that this same old man, who had so much comfort in his daughter, had been a voluntary prisoner himself in his younger years for his father. How remarkably would be fulfilled the words of the wise Jewish writer? *He that honoureth his father, shall have joy of his own children.*

Valer.
Max.

Ecclus. iii.
5.

S E R M O N XI.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART III.

P R O V. x. i.

A WISE SON MAKETH A GLAD FATHER.

THERE is no period of life, in which it is not better and happier to be wise and good, than profligate and wicked. For the reason, why God, who is love and goodness itself, requires any thing of us, is because it is suitable to the nature he has given us, and *for our good*. This is the general ground of his commands. And if in any instances, it *seem* otherwise; it is not so in reality; our true good is not that, which appears to us as such. In these cases, we are to rely on the providence and promises of God.

Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's

SERM.
XI.

Matt. xix.
29.

SERM. *ſake; ſhall receive an hundred fold, and*
XI. *ſhall inherit everlaſting life.*

But, though virtue is indeed always perfectly reaſonable, yet it is moſt *amiable* in youth. It is ever, and in every one the object of our approbation; but then eſpecially of our love.

Decency in men of years is no more than what we look for; the payment as it were of a debt. We demand it, in return perhaps for that veneration and reſpect, which is given to age, and as the natural conſequence of the wiſdom taught by Time.

But when we behold in youth, the ſame degree of regularity and piety, which we are wont to expect only from the aged; when we ſee one, who is comparatively but a child, grown up to ſuch a height of devout reverence for the Supreme Being, ſuch prudent government of himſelf, and exact attention to all the rights

rights and demands of other men, as are mostly the product, when they are produced at all, of long experience, and the labour of years; his excellent accomplishments are the more admirable for being less looked for; and the natural gracefulness of youth adds also something of its own beauty, and reflects a lustre upon every virtue, with which itself is adorned.

Hardly indeed does a late penitent give us, or himself, any good proof of the sincerity of his repentance, and a true hearty attachment to the cause he has at last chosen. May we not surmise it possible, that no desire of leading a holy life, but the visible approach of death; not any love of God or goodness, but the fear of impending torment, has roused him for a moment from his lethargy, and awakened him to some little transient sense of his condition? And that were the apprehension of danger removed, and his prospect of life lengthened, he would return with greediness to the iniquities of

SERM. his youth, and lay aside his thoughts of
XI. religion and the grave together.

Far be it from a preacher of the gospel to teach, that *any* Sinner, who comes to God with repentance and faith, can be rejected. But habits of evil, by length of time rooted deeply into our frame, are not to be torn from us without so many struggles, and so much pain and trouble, as few or none, upon the trial, find themselves willing to endure,

What spectacle more melancholy, than that of an old sinner, at last smitten with remorse? beginning to be sensible of the deformity and danger of the course of life he is in, yet unable almost, and not quite willing to forsake it; under a load that sits heavy on him, with just perhaps the power, and not the resolution to shake it off; fond of his old practices and companions, yet wishing a thousand times he had never known them; and afraid of the consequence, which he is going forward

ward still to meet: how hard is repentance, but death is dreadful: *forgive*, he tries to say, and holds up his shaking hands towards heaven: *to be forgiven*, I must repent: to repent, is to offend no more, what pain soever it may cost me, to repair all wrongs, restore unfair gains, be brought perhaps to want, exposed perhaps to infamy. Alas! who that has done evil long, can at last repent worthily? how easy to *be* innocent! impossible to *become* so! how terrible is judgment! how bitter is a true and late repentance!

Poor, unhappy man! would you envy him his meditations? yet with these fruitless wishes, ineffectual efforts, distracted apprehensions, many pass into eternity, who might once have been eminent saints with a part of that self-denial, which now only disturbs them in their sins, and avails nothing to their salvation.

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These are the great arguments, it must be acknowledged, for an early piety; and they are sufficient surely to recommend it to the choice of every young person, that will reflect upon them as he ought.

Yet there is still remaining another motive besides these; which, though comparatively small, will have some weight, if they who have indeed cast off the fear of God, have not lost also the sentiments and feelings of men, but remain still open to the impressions of humanity and compassion. How happy for both parties! if some youth, careless, I confess, but perhaps not cruel, could be induced to do good to himself for another's sake, and enter immediately on a sober and pious life, that his Father or Mother, might have comfort in him: as it is written,

Prov. x. 1. *A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*

It

It is a well known observation, that if you say of any person *he is ungrateful*, you give him the very worst of characters. Whoever is without gratitude, is devoid of all virtue. If a man can be so insensible and mean, as to forget the law of kindness, and break through the strong but liberal restraints of love, cunning he may be called, but can never be truly wise, or capable of any generous or virtuous action; and as little indeed of any real piety towards God, *for he that loveth not his brother*, his benefactor, friend, father, *whom he hath seen*; how can he love God, *whom he hath not seen*? 1 John iv, 20.

Now we may venture to assert, that if a man has any well wishers, any benefactors on earth, to whom he is bound by indissoluble ties of gratitude, his parents are the persons.

Indeed one is willing to think, that many of those young people whose behaviour is so blameable, are not sensible
of

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of the uneasiness it occasions, nor at all aware how much anguish is endured on their account.

They run heedlessly forward in the broad and open path, and have no thought but of the pleasure they are pursuing.

Yet stop, young man, we beg, a little, to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too much to bestow a moment's reflection upon those, who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all—*all* indeed thou canst not: alas! ill had been thy lot, had not their care of thee begun before thou couldest remember, or know any thing.

Now so proud, self willed, inexorable, thou couldest then only ask by wailing, and move them with thy tears. And they were moved. Their heart was touched with thy distress: they relieved and watched thy wants, before thou knewest thine own necessities or their kindness. They
clothed

clothed thee ; thou knewest not that thou wast naked : thou askedst not for bread ; but they fed thee. And ever since, in short, for the particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many surely to be all utterly forgotten, it has been the very principal endeavour, employment and study of their lives to do service to thee.

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And remember, for this too is of moment, it is all out of pure unfeigned affection. Other friends mostly expect their civilities to be repaid, and their kind offices returned with interest. But parents have no thoughts like these. They *seek not thine, but thee*. Their regard is real, and hearty, and undesigning. They have no reflex views upon themselves, no oblique glances towards their own interest. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's welfare, they arrive at the full accomplishment of their wishes. They have no higher object of their ambition. Be thou but happy, and they are so.

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And now tell me : is not something to be done, I do not now say for thyself, but for them ? If it be too much to desire of thee to be good, and wise, and virtuous, and happy for thy own sake ; yet be happy for *their's*. Think that a sober, upright, and let me add, religious life, besides the blessings it will bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of unfailing comfort to thy declining parents, and make the heart of the aged sing for joy.

What shall we say ? Which of these is happier ? the Son, that maketh a glad Father ? or the Father, blessed with such a Son ?

Fortunate young man ! who hast an heart open so early to virtuous delights ; and canst find thy own happiness, in returning thy father's blessing upon his own head.

And happy father ! whose years have been prolonged, not as it often happens,
to

to see his comforts fall from him one after another, and to become at once old and destitute; but to taste a new pleasure, not to be found among the pleasures of youth, reserved for his age; to reap the harvest of all his cares and labour in the duty, affection, and felicity of his dear child. His very look bespeaks the inward satisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of age sit light on him. He feels not the troubles of life: he smiles at the approach of death. Sees himself still living and honoured in the memory and the person of his son, his other, dearer self; and passes down to the receptacle of all the living in the fulness of content and joy.

How unlike to this, is the condition of him, who has the affliction to be the father of a wicked offspring! Poor unhappy man! No sorrow is like unto thy sorrow. Diseases and death are blessings, if compared with the anguish of thy heart, when thou seest thy dearest children run heedlessly headlong in the ways of sin, forgetful

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ful of their parent's counsel, and their own happiness. Unfortunate old man ! How often does he wish, he had never been born, or had been cut off before he was a father ! No reflection is able to afford him consolation. He grows old betimes : and the afflictions of age are doubled on his head. In vain are instruments of pleasure brought forth. His soul *refuses* comfort. Every blessing of life is lost upon Him. No success is able to give him joy. His triumphs are like that of David : While his friends, captains, soldiers, were rending the air with the shouts of victory ; he, poor conqueror ! *went up*, as it is written, *to the chamber over the gate, and wept : And as he went, thus he said ; O my son Absalom ! my son, my son Absalom ! Would God I had died for thee ! O Absalom, my son, my son !*

2 Sam.
xviii. 33.

S E R-

S E R M O N XII.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART IV.

E P H E S. vi. 4.

AND YE FATHERS PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH; BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND AD-MONITION OF THE LORD.

A Barbarous custom prevailed once even among the Greek nations, that whenever the parents of a child were unwilling to be troubled with the care of bringing him up, they took, and *exposed* him, as the phrase was; laid and left him, as soon as he was born, in some distant solitary place, to die by famine, or be torn in pieces by wild beasts.

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Sometimes it happened, that a traveller having lost his road, or a sportsman in
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Luke x. 36.

pur-
suit of game, passed that way, took up the infant and maintained him with his own. *Which now of these two, to imitate a question of our Lord, think ye, was father to the exposed child? He surely that shewed mercy on him.* The other deserved not the name, nor can claim the rights of a parent: He was rather a murderer. And if the laws of his country protected him from punishment, and the customs of those times from shame; yet by no law certainly of reason or religion, can he ever demand duty from this son; but is to be excepted out of the number of those parents, concerning whom it is commanded, *Honour thy father and thy mother.*

Power and prerogatives are for the benefit of the *possessor* only in the *second* place. The good of those who are governed, the service of the public, is the *principal* thing intended. This authority of parents, among the rest, as it is so considerable, is charged with a proportionable load of obligations; and must be supported

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supported by benefits, or at least by kindness, which is a disposition to confer them.

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Indeed to do them justice, Parents are not commonly deficient in this disposition. They should love their children, no doubt; but they do so, and there is no occasion in general to remind them of it. I do not remember, that this duty is commanded any where in the whole compass of the Scriptures. Is it therefore unnecessary? God forbid. If any parent should feel in his heart, that he is without so natural an affection; he ought, (and this is the meaning of all other precepts to love any one,) to acquire and cultivate it by all the ways he can, and especially by *acting* as if he *possessed* it.

But Parents do not so often want kindness, as discretion and judgment in the direction of it.

Sometimes they let their love for their children become *too strong*. And then,

SERM. as it is very *painful* to themselves ; so it
XII. is not for that reason the more *useful*, or

even *acceptable* to the person who is the
object of it. But rather it is apt to do
harm, and create disgust ; and becomes in
both these respects, like any other *immo-
derate affection*, the cause of it's own dis-
appointment.

A child certainly has a right to be be-
loved : and it seems prudent, as it is na-
tural and delightful, to let him understand
that he is so ; to the end that *his* heart too
may be touched, that he may be influ-
enced in his behaviour towards you by
the best and most pleasing motive, and
may rely always with entire confidence on
your good intentions towards him.

But still it may not be advisable to
make him too sensible of his power, lest
he should be tempted to abuse it. When
you have suffered him upon a few trials
to carry off the victory, against all reason,
merely by his importunity ; innocent and
harmless

harmless as you think him, he will feel his own Importance, and with a wanton frowardness have recourse to it continually; imperious in his illegitimate authority; a *tyrant*, as well as an *usurper*. Till at last, not wholly without cause, though with prodigious ingratitude, he may impute to you all the calamities that follow; upbraiding you with your excess of tenderness, and lamenting in his greatest misery, not so much his own obstinate ungovernable passions, as the weak and fatal condescension of you, who should have ruled him.

But though restraint and *discipline* be absolutely necessary for all young persons without exception, yet the same discipline will not be proper for all. It is to be accommodated in the degree, and duration, to their disposition, age, sex, and other considerations. All the hardships and refusals they are obliged to submit to, not only must be necessary for some good end, but should appear to be so, if possible, to

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themselves. Ruled they must be, or they are ruined; but it should be by reason, Passion must shew itself with an ill grace, and ill effect, in the cultivation of morals; which consists so very much in the restraint and government of the passions.

Prov. xiii.
24.

Correction is a part of discipline, and comes under the same rules. Solomon has expressed the necessity of it in strong terms: *He that spareth the rod, hateth his son.* But though you have recourse sometimes even to this token of your displeasure; it will be with moderation, with temper, after the ineffectual use of other applications, and with a real, and an apparent unwillingness.

As passion is improper in the government of children, so is *partiality*. It is observed of some parents, that they divide their kindness with a very unequal hand, treating their children with a groundless and disagreeable distinction: insomuch that of the one parent it is become almost
a pro-

a proverbial saying, that the *worst son is the favourite*. It will not however follow, that he has the best usage: Indulgence may not prove so. But this censure of the partiality of the mother is perhaps rather severe: for if to an equal stock of original affection for all her sons, you add, what is so nearly akin to love, pity, of which profligate children will be often the proper objects; and fear, which they will always excite; what wonder that the sensation is quickened: and such tokens of tenderness discovered, as are only to be drawn forth by calamities and danger?

The *maintenance* of children is to be suited to the station they are likely to appear in, and the abilities of the parents. There is a fault both in the excess and defect; and the consequences of either, may be bad. Yet the rich, methinks, should not be excused from some good degree of bodily exercise, if their constitution will bear it; nor the poorest left

SERM. utterly without all learning, if their capacity will receive it.
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I must not omit, that the fear of God, and some instruction in the Christian Religion, a regard to truth and honesty, and a habit of diligence, are indispensably necessary to all, even the poorest children; and I could add, I doubt, that they are very little taught them.

For the *distribution* of your *substance* you are not to be called to account too strictly: What you have to leave behind you, is not to be demanded even by your children as a debt; that part especially, which is of your own acquisition. You will consider however the *customs*, as well as laws of your country; what will be generally *thought right*, and what yourselves shall be likely to approve at your last hour, that your own heart may not then condemn you.

Yet,

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Yet, is it not intended to counsel you to an immediate and final disposal of what you have, even to your children: It is one thing to *arrange*, and another to *alienate*. This latter is not generally thought advisable. Gratitude is not found so strong a principle, as expectation. And the parent, that would be sure of his children's obedience, must not only have been very kind to them, but keep it in his power to be so still. The wise son of Sirach is uncommonly earnest upon this head. *Hear me, O ye great men of the people, and hearken with your ears, ye rulers of the congregation.*—What is it, that he would introduce with so much solemnity; commanding those in authority, and teaching the teachers of mankind?—*Give not thy son, and wife, thy brother, and friend, power over thee while thou livest: and give not thy goods to another; lest it repent thee, and thou intreat for the same again. As long as thou livest, and hast breath in thee, give not thy self over to any.*

Ecclus.
xxxiii. 18,
&c.

Yet

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Yet there is an error on the other side. As liberality without measure may be imprudent, extreme parsimony would be cruel. Too great a depression of those whom you must advance at your death, will spoil both the grace and value of your gift; making your heirs unhappy, first in the tedious expectation, and then in the awkward possession of a fortune they were never taught to use, or to *enjoy*.

Nor sons alone, but daughters, by such ill-judged œconomy, have been greatly injured; and have taken a *dangerous revenge*. They cannot indeed be justified; but neither are you excusable. And you should remember, that as you are joined in the blame, you will find yourselves certainly to *partake* in the consequences, whatever they be. Besides the dishonour, the distress will always reach you. Your happiness is involved in their's: You sail on the same bottom. And whatever you *acquire*, or *keep*, you may appear splendid, and be called fortunate: but you will
never

never be happy, while you have children that are miserable and infamous.

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But if, on the contrary, by your attention, and encouragement, by a suitable education, and a constant kindness, tempered, or rather heightened by discretion, you can, with God's blessing, make them good, in the first place, you will do *them* the greatest service that is possible; secondly, you will discharge your own *conscience*, and acquit yourselves faithfully of the great trust reposed in you by Providence; and lastly, you will reap your *reward* in their merit, and feel the comfort of all their happiness, both in this world, and that which is to come. Besides the many instances of gratitude and affection to be expected from such children, which may prove to be useful, and will always be pleasing; you will participate of all their welfare, reflected, as it were, into your own bosom; as your kindness laid the foundation of their felicity, the influence is reciprocal; and their virtues,

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*PROV. xvii.
6.

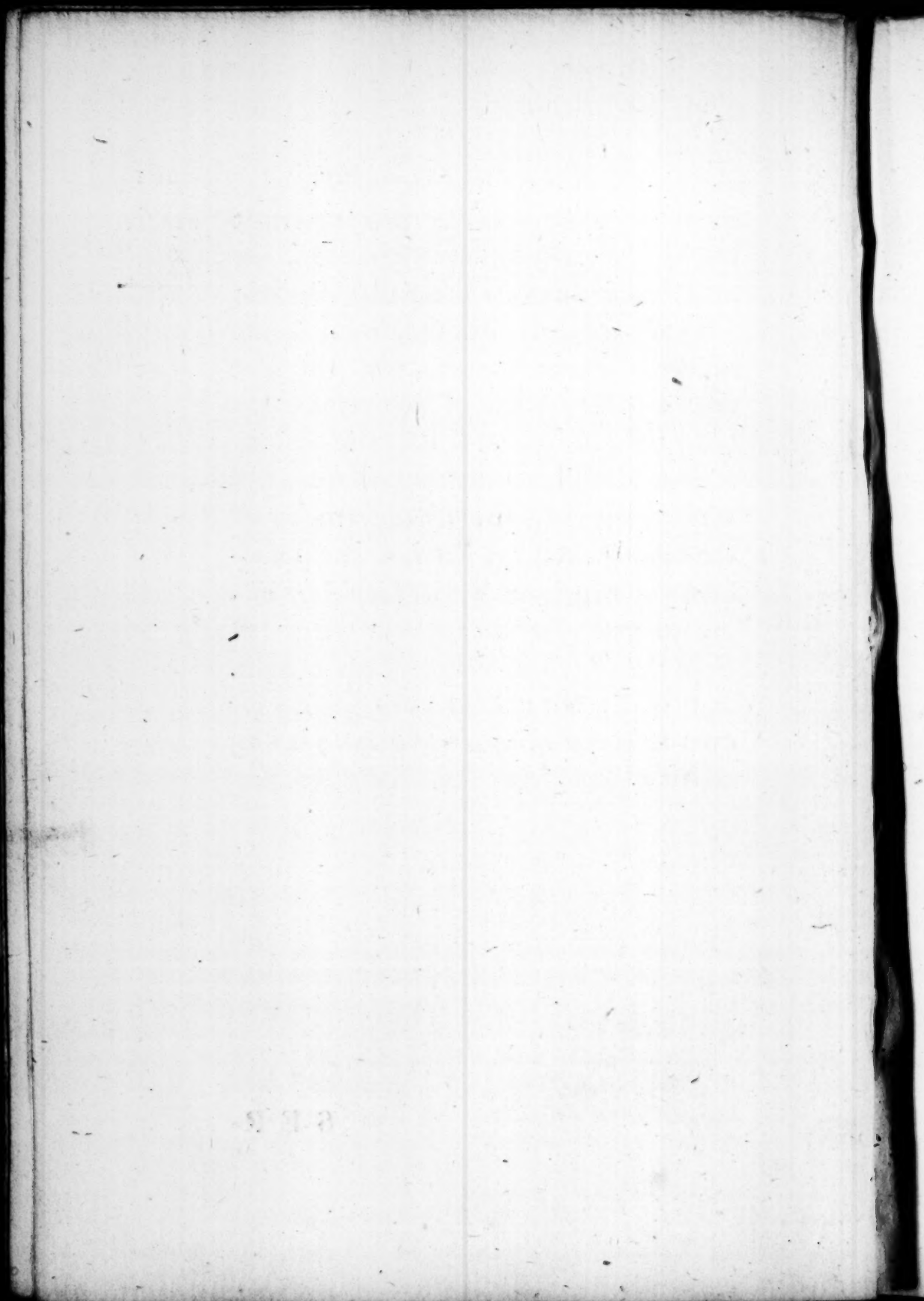
virtues, and those of their children after them, 'will to you be matter of constant and growing satisfaction. **Children's children are the crown of old men : and the glory of children are their fathers.*

There is yet one thing more you are to provide for your children, which must not be overlooked ; itself one of the most efficacious means of doing them service ; and such as may be properly joined with every other instance of your attention and tenderness : I mean the silent but persuasive admonition of your own virtuous life, and good example. With what face, or with what success, can any one reprimand his family for irregularities, which he commits ; or exhort to virtues, that he only talks of ? Parents, we see, have an additional reason to be religious and exemplary, over and above the motives that are common to all Christians. They cannot do themselves mischief, without great hazard to those whom they have brought into the world. Testify your affection
for

for your children, in the most important instance both to yourselves, and them. Go before them in every thing that is good : Instruct, and lead them too, in the way to heaven. Though poor, you will give them a noble fortune, if you teach them to be good christians. Your example may be better to them, than any estate. But what amends will you make them, by all the kindness you can shew, or the possessions you may provide, if it should be owing to you, that they are cut off at last from the inheritance of the saints in light, and condemned to have their portion for ever, *where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?*

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S E R M O N XIII.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT. PART V.

COLOS. iii. 22.

SERVANTS, OBEY IN ALL THINGS YOUR
MASTERS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH;
NOT WITH EYE-SERVICE, AS MEN
PLEASERS, BUT IN SINGLENESS OF
HEART, FEARING GOD.

THE Ten Commandments are delivered, most of them, in few words, with a dignity suited to the authority by which they are enjoined, and a simplicity answerable to the manners of that age when they were spoken. The great capital duties of religion and morality are singled out and commanded, or rather the *violation* of them is *forbidden* in plain and general terms. A fair and honest mind is the best of all interpreters.

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SERM. He who applies himself to the keeping of
 XIII. these few commands with such a disposition, will not be * *far from the kingdom of God*. To persons of a captious and corrupt temper, no words are sufficient; the prohibition never reaches their case; the command is never binding to them: the whole volume of the scriptures, and all the writings of all the moralists in the world, are too little to enforce a virtue on a depraved heart, and explain what men *will not* understand.

* Mark xii.
 34.

There are two or three duties, which I would throw together here, and make the subject of one discourse. They are of importance, and one or other of them makes part of the duty of most persons: it is of little consequence under what head they are arranged, provided they be well understood and practised.

Colof. iii.
 20.

It is written, *Children, obey your parents in all things*: in like manner, and the same words, *Servants, obey in all things your masters*;

Colof. iii.
 22.

masters ; it follows, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God: knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. Obedience and fidelity constitute a great part of what is due from a servant ; and they are evidently due : obedience is immediately implied in the relation of a servant ; and fidelity should accompany all the intercourse between man and man. They are plainly reasonable and right ; and therefore well pleasing to God, as the discharge of filial duty is : Secondly, they are as plainly required by him ; and so may be advanced at the same time into an obedience to God also : and Thirdly, He promises, we see, himself to repay this service, as well as the other of children to their parents, both liberally, and in a way peculiarly suitable : Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.

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Colof. iii.
24.

Your recompense for being good servants to men, will be, that you shall become the *children* of God. He will look

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upon

SERM. upon you as his sons : You shall be
 XIII. adopted into his family, and made heirs
 of his heavenly kingdom. * *For there is*
 * Rom. ii. *no respect of persons with him : He is the*
 II. x. 12. *same Lord over all.* In his eye there is no
 Gal. iii. 28. distinction : *There is neither bond nor free :*
 I Cor. vii. *He that is called in the Lord, being a ser-*
 22. *vant, is the Lord's freeman : likewise also*
he that is called being free, is Christ's ser-
vant. The highest angels in heaven are
 God's ministers and messengers, and are
 glorious and happy in their obedience :
 and the very meanest of the sons of men, if
 not wanting in the duties of their present
 station, whatever it be, shall be advanced
 to the same likeness ; for *They are equal*
 Luke xx. *unto the Angels, and are the children of*
 36. *God, being the children of the resurrection.*
 The lowest offices become the steps of
 our highest advancement. Every station
 is holy, that is filled by a devout person.
 He who doth *service as unto the Lord*, is
 as he that ministreth at the altar. Though
 your time and hands are taken up, more
 perhaps than they should be, by a hard
 master,

Duty of Servants and Masters.

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master, you have your hearts and affections free. Love God, and keep his commandments, and your lot is to be envied.

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There is reserved in heaven for you, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

1 Pet. i. 4.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. There is indeed no station of life, in which the virtue of patience will not be much wanted. It is very necessary, both for servants and masters: though the former are called to exercise it in a peculiar manner. But still there are two considerations, that will make some difference in this duty.

1 Pet. ii.
18, 19.

First, Servants are of different *degrees*: some of them are entertained for particular purposes, expressed, or well understood on both sides; and if they answer these

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purposes

SERM. purposes fairly, and honestly, they have
XIII. discharged the duty of their service.

Secondly, No servants now among us are in the same condition, that servants were in formerly; and particularly, when the Scriptures were written; for those were *slaves*, and the word might properly be translated so. And therefore, though servants are obliged no doubt, still and as much as ever they were, to be faithful and honest, *not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity*; yet they are not bound to all the same things, nor for the same time. With us, they mostly *hire themselves*; and it is to *service*, not *servitude*. By the law of the land, they are not slaves; and there is no Christian law, that obliges them to become such. *Art thou called being a servant, or slave? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

Tit. ii. 9.

I Cor. vii.
21.

It is both prudent and right in servants to be *respectful* also, as well as honest.
Wife

Wise and Christian counsel is that, which is given them by the Apostle, if they can *to please their own masters well in all things, not answering again*—without murmurings, complaints, reluctance, which makes their service more painful and less acceptable. Yet in these countries, where they serve only upon agreement, they may certainly insist upon the *conditions* of it.

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Tit. ii. 9.

And though they are obliged by all the ties of reason, and religion, and their own interest to *behave* themselves *well* in their service; it may be, they are bound by none of these to *continue* in it: and, excepting only the case of contracts for a *fixed time*, and some little restraints also which are established by *custom*, when they judge that they can be treated with more kindness, or receive a better recompense from a *new master*, or in another *station*, they are at liberty to try. Conscience towards God does not oblige them to *suffer* thus *wrongfully*: the counsels

1 Pet. ii. 19.

SERM. suggested by prudence, may be followed
XIII. with innocence.

Eph. vi. 9.

And ye, masters, do the same thing unto them ;— that is, act in the same reasonable and religious manner ; be as considerate and equitable, as you expect them to be respectful and honest ; in one word, be such masters, as you would wish to meet with, if you were servants. Forbearing threatening : It is a sign you want skill in the art of governing, if you have much occasion for severity ; and you must want both religion and humanity, if you use it when it is not necessary. Take care that none of the offences you would correct, nor any other, be any way owing to yourselves ; be not partakers of their sins, by giving them encouragement or provocation to commit them, or setting an example of them ; Knowing that your master also is in heaven.—Knowing this ; you need not have recourse to imagination, to make you see what is reasonable in this case,

case, and induce you to do, as *you would be done to*. The supposition that you too are servants, is very true: You have a master, as well as they, and the same that they have; who will deal fairly by you both, according to your merit and not rank: and a very considerable part of your merit will consist in your good behaviour to them. You shall meet from God with the mercy you shew; at the time when you will want it. But if you be injurious and oppressive, if you be lordly, and insolent, and inhuman; it had been better you had been born to beg, or that you had never been born. Your dead body will be buried with a little more ceremony than their's; and there ends all your glory: The grave is the concluding scene of earthly greatness: *The rich man died, and was buried*. Then a different prospect opens: *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*. There will be an exchange of station in

Luke xvi.

ver. 23,

SERM. the world to come: * *Many that are first,*
 XIII. *shall be last; and the last, first.*

* Mark x.
 31.

Numb. xi.
 11, &c.

Princes, Magistrates, Superiours of every sort, have a right to respect and honour, and to obedience, according to their place, and their relation to us, and the laws of that civil society in which we live. These duties, resembling so nearly what we owe to our parents, rank easily under the same rule. The relation has been often expressed by the same name; and the obligations are similar. Moses said unto the Lord, wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child? The senators of Rome were always addressed by the name of Fathers: and the Emperors did more frequently receive, than deserve, the title of the fathers of their country. Christianity makes

makes no alteration in these duties, on either side ; but only enforces them more strongly ; and disposes men better to the discharge of them ; by turning their thoughts from those objects, which occasion competitions and jealousies among worldly minded persons, *to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all.*

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Heb. xii.
22, 23.

Even age alone gives a kind of superiority ; and, as some little balance to many disadvantages, carries an allowed claim to respect. *Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: And Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And without all contradiction, as the Apostle argues, the less is blessed of the better. Thou shalt rise up, says the law of Moses, before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.*

Gen. xlvii.
9.

Heb. vii. 7.

Levit. xix.
32.

The

SERM. The Apostle Peter commands, **ye younger*
XIII. *submit yourselves unto the elder.* And the

* 1 Pet. v.
5.

Roman Poet tells us, that in the virtuous times of that common-wealth, it would have been esteemed a capital crime not to rise up with reverence to an aged person.

Lastly, there is also a respect and reverence due, as well as maintenance, to the ministers of the church. *Ministers* they call themselves, and they are willing to be: not only the ministers of God, as magistrates are styled, but even *your servants also for Jesus' sake.* But the people, on the other hand, will look upon them, as indeed they are named in Scripture, as *rulers and fathers.*—This is a subject, which appears to disadvantage in our hands. Let this be the only competition between us, who shall be the most submissive, and most serviceable. *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

1 Tim. v.
17.
1 Cor. iv.
15.
1 John ii.
1.

1 Pet. v. 5.

S E R.

S E R M O N XIV.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 13.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

WHERE no law is, there is no transgression: For sin is the transgression of the law. But it is by no means necessary, that this law should be pronounced in audible sounds by the mouth of God, or engraved in stone by his finger. It may be woven into the frame of our nature, and written in *fleshy tables of the heart*; as many of God's laws, which are also commanded in Scripture, evidently are: and these are binding to men of all nations, and in every age. The ancient patriarchs, so far as they were not taught by revelation, and other persons before the law of Moses was delivered, and the Gentiles to whom it was not given, *were a law unto themselves*: the law was legible

SERM.
XIV.

Rom. iv.

15.

1 John iii.

4.

2 Cor. iii.
3.Rom. ii.
14.

SERM. ble in their hearts ; and according as they
 XIV. observed or transgressed it, their own conscience acquitted or condemned them.

Take for an example the first sin, of which we have any account, after the fall, committed by the very first man born into the world, and no less a sin than the murder of his brother. How quick is the progress man is able to make in evil ! mature in the infancy of the world, and advanced to the utmost pitch of guilt in his very first efforts ! Not, however, without some sentiments of shame, and an inward natural sense of the authority of the law, though it was not yet either pronounced, or written.

Gen. ii. 17. To *Adam* indeed it was said, *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.* The prohibition was plain ; and if the criminals endeavoured to hide themselves among the trees, their ignorance may be wondered at, but their confusion was natural.

Murder

Murder was not forbidden, till after it had been committed. God had never said to *Cain*, as far as we know, *Thou shalt not kill*: Yet was he very sensible, he had done wrong; and he prevaricates, dissembles, and denies it, with a mixture of meanness and insolence, the natural attendants of conscious guilt. *Where is Abel thy brother? I know not: am I my brother's keeper?*

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Gen. iv. 9.

There seems to have been another murder committed, before there was a law against it. And in that instance also, the criminal was sensible he had done amiss; and appears to feel and suffer the very stroke which he had given. *Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.*

Gen. iv. 23.

Immediately after the *flood*, the law against murder was delivered *expressly*, with the penalty of death annexed to it. And the sixth of the ten commandments is

SERM.
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Gen. ix. 6.

is but a repetition, or rather an epitome of that original law, which was given to Noah and his sons ; and in them to all the world. *Whofo sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ; for in the image of God made he man.*

John iv. 24.
Luke xxiv.
39.

God is a spirit ; and a spirit hath not flesh and bones. So far we have the words of our Lord for our guide. Hence we learn, that this *image* of God which is in man, doth not consist in the *form* of his *body*, nor any property of bones and flesh. *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you ; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.*

Deut. iv.
35, 16.

Neither can this *image of God* in man, consist in any *original*, but now no longer existing qualities of mind, which Adam might possess *before* the fall, and lose with his innocence ; since we find it is still,

even after the flood, assigned as a reason against murder, or an argument of the great guilt of it. *Surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.* If this image, whatever it be, were extinct and lost, it could no longer be defaced; and consequently could not now be brought in to constitute, or aggravate the guilt of murder.

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Gen. ix. 5,
6.

Yet it appears to be something, which is *not in other creatures*. Of all the animals upon earth, it is in *man alone*. This may be gathered from the manner in which this expression is introduced, both in the history of the creation, and after the flood. *And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:*
and

Gen. i. 25,
26.

SERM. *and let them have dominion over the fish of*
 XIV. *the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and*

over the cattle, and over all the earth.—

Gen. ix. 1,
 &c.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said; The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and fowl of the air; into your hand are they delivered: every moving thing that liveth, shall be meat for you. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man: whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

The sum of these three observations amounts only to this, That the *Divine Image* in man, is to be looked for among the *endowments of mind*, now existing in the human race, and *not* possessed by the *brute* creation.

Now in which of them soever this resemblance lies, or be it that it consists in more particulars than one; whether it be
 placed

placed in the *reason* of man, which raises him so much above the other creatures, and has been called even by heathens a *ray of the Divinity*; or in the necessary consequence of that reason, *conscience*, the perception of moral differences, the power of discerning what is right and wrong, a faculty, among all the creatures on earth, peculiar to man alone; or were it to consist in the *dominion*, delegated to him by God over the earth and it's inhabitants, and possessed in a considerable degree by means of his superiour understanding; let this Divine Image be placed in which of these particulars you please, or all of them together, it will still constitute, so long as it is still subsisting, a just argument against the commission of murder. The guilt is increased by this consideration; and the injury done to *man*, becomes also impiety against *God*. He who defaces the copy, would attack the original, we may presume, were it placed within his reach: and it is not right, but power only that protects even the Omnipotent upon his

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throne, when his representative is assaulted with such audacious and profane outrage. Every sin is a violation of God's law, an act of disobedience to the Supreme Lawgiver; but this is an offence that approaches nearer to him, and becomes, as it were, a *personal* indignity.

The injury which is done to *man* by the sin of murder, is of the largest size; and in this respect too, the horrid crime before us has many great, and some peculiar aggravations.

In the first place, it is an offence against the *state*. The loss of a citizen is a misfortune to the publick: the riches, strength, and glory of a prince consist in the number of his subjects: and is it a wonder, if he is the most implacable in his resentment against those, who rob him of his principal treasure?

Murder is a disturbance of the publick *peace*; and the greatest invasion of those

those rights, which it is the very end of civil society to protect.

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As the baleful influence of this crime extends to the prince and the state in general ; so it's venom is felt by many *private* persons at once, with peculiar anguish ; the wrong being by no means confined to the unhappy person, who is the more immediate sufferer. He at least is out of the reach of further violence ; and knows not the affliction of the widow, the orphan, or the childless parent, who survive to more lasting sorrow.

A son, or husband, a father, or friend, taken away by the course of nature, by the hand of Providence, in some distressful cases, and to tender minds, has been found an affliction too heavy to be borne ; and a second funeral has followed, through excessive sorrow for the first. How greatly the anguish must be aggravated, and every sting of grief sharpened, when the stroke is unjust and bloody—may we never know.

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To the *person himself* who suffers this extreme violence, the injury is the highest of all that can possibly be offered. The murderer takes away all the blessings of this world at once, and the time and means also which God had graciously granted of making preparation for another. He cuts me off perhaps while my repentance is yet imperfect, in my most unthinking hour; and with one blow consigns, it may be, *two* immortal souls to perdition.

Luke xii.
40.

Oh ! let us be always ready; for *at an hour when we think not, our Lord cometh.*

Luke xii. 4.

Let us be always ready; and leave it in the power of no man ever to do us *such* injury: that our greatest enemies, when they have us most in their hands, may be able only *to kill the body*. We take away the sting of death, and escape the cruellest part of their malice, if we die prepared for judgment.

Let

Let us be always ready; and reap this benefit even from the vices of men: let the wickedness of others induce us to be the more earnest and early in every thing that is good; then will the fruit be sweet, though the root is bitter.

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Happy for us! if by any means, and urged by any arguments, we be but prevailed upon to live well; if we have such a sense, either of the dignity of man's nature, made in the image of God, or on the other hand of the frailty of our state, and the dangers, that surround us on every side, as to be induced to make God our friend, and to take to ourselves *the shield of faith, and helmet of salvation; armour, that will quench the fiery darts of our worst adversary.*

Ephes. vi.
16, 17.

He was a *murderer* from the beginning: his wiles brought death into the world: and he still *goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.* If we suffer ourselves to be

1 Pet. v. 8.

SERM. overcome by this enemy, the mischief is
XIV. indeed irreparable.

The murderer, who takes my life, is utterly unable to make restitution : God, however, I know, will raise me from the dead at the last day, and clothe me with a body no longer liable to dissolution. Eph. ii. 1. But if I be then found to be dead *in trespasses and sins* ; there remains no future resurrection from that death, but an endless state of despair and torment.

Let us therefore be always prepared, Luke xxi. 34. *and so that day shall never come upon us unawares.* Nevertheless, as death is naturally terrible, and this life is the time God hath granted us to prepare by his grace for a better ; we may very rationally, and let us now devoutly, beseech him to deliver us *from lightning and tempest ; from plague, pestilence, and famine ; from battle and murder ; and from sudden death,*

S E R-

S E R M O N XV.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

MATTH. xv. 19, 20.

OUT OF THE HEART PROCEED EVIL
THOUGHTS, MURDERS.

TAKE now thy son, thine only son, SERM.
 and offer him for a burnt-offering. — XV.
 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and Gen. xxi.
 took the knife to slay his son. — He did no 2, 10.
 more; he was stopped by an angel. The
 outward act was not brought to the ex-
 pected end: but in the will his obedience
 was complete and perfect; and accepted
 accordingly by the righteous judge, who
 knoweth the heart, and calleth those things Rom. iv.
 which be not, as though they were. By 17.
 myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, be- Gen. xxi.
 cause thou hast done this thing, and hast not 16, 17, 18.
 withheld thy son, thine only son; that in
 blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying
 I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of
 heaven, and as the sand which is upon the
 N 4 sea

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James ii.
21.

sea shore; — and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. If he had been suffered to proceed further, and finish the action he had undertaken, his service had been but the same; and would have merited no greater recompense: His mind was wholly consenting to the sacrifice that was required of him. The will before God is the deed; and the question is properly asked by the Apostle, *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

1 Sam. xvi.
7.
Heb. iv. 12.

But then, as it is an advantage to good men to be tried by a judge, *who seeth not as man seeth, but is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*: so, on the other hand, by parity of reason, we must acknowledge, that we shall be condemned justly before the same tribunal for the wickedness of our will; and that whenever we but attempt to do evil, with God it is executed.

When

When the three Jews were cast by the king of Babylon into the fiery furnace; as they were martyrs, he was a murderer: though *on their bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.*

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Dan. iii.

If the wickedness be in the *intention* only, and have not broken out into an attempt; yet is it even then to be looked upon as accomplished; for the mind is the man; and his merit or guilt, whatever it be, is all there; it has no other habitation, nor existence.

It is possible, you will say, he may be touched with remorse, and repent of his wickedness before the commission of it: but repentance implies guilt; and if it be sincere, is, through God's goodness in Christ Jesus, always entitled to mercy.

If you reply, that a greater obstinacy in evil may be necessary to carry us through
2 the

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the execution of a wicked action, than what is implied in the mere intention; you say what may be true sometimes; and when it is, God knows. And he also knows, when the same external act, in two criminals, is attended with different degrees of aggravation.

Not only the attempt, and intention; the very *wish* to do wickedness, is wicked.

Prov. xxiv.

2.

Matth. v.

28.

The thought of foolishness is sin. Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already, in his heart. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: Whosoever is angry without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.

1 John iii.

15.

Matt. v.

22.

Ps. lxxvi. 7.

Hab. i. 3.

Ah! who may stand in thy sight, O Lord; thou who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Yet thou seeest it's secret thoughts, and the inmost recesses of it's malignity. How shall we appear in thy presence, or lift up our eyes, and such hearts to thee? let us adopt the confession*

Jer. xvii. 9.

Criminal Intentions.

191

confession of thy holy prophet, * O Lord, the great and dreadful God, we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and thy judgments: O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us confusion of face.

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* Dan. ix.

Thus, every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God; for by the law is the knowledge of sin; by that law especially, which makes the look only of lust to be adultery; and malice, murder.

Rom. iii.
19, 20.

But as guilt may be incurred, by evil thoughts and designs; so actions may be performed materially evil, without deserving censure,

It is not murder to kill a man in the just defence of yourself, or of another, from some great violence: the blood of him that is slain is upon his own head, if his hand was lifted up to shed blood.

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* Deut. xix.
11.

Exod. xxi.
14.

Deut. xix.
12, 13.

The same may be said of that blood, which is spilt in the legal execution of justice. ** If any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die; thine eye shall not pity him. — If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from my altar that he may die.* The punishment of such an offender is so far from bringing upon us, that it puts away the guilt of innocent blood. *The elders of his city shall deliver him into the band of the avenger; and thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.* The cruelty in this case were to spare; and mercy were a second murder. Some other offences also, though they be less heinous than this, it may be necessary for the publick good, to punish in the same manner: and there are examples of the like salutary severity, among the laws that came from God.

The

The blood that is shed in war, may also be unavoidable: when it is so, God knows, and will judge: it is out of our province. A common person, in most of these cases, is able to frame but very imperfect notions. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers.* Tit. iii. 1. We are not at liberty to censure, when we do not understand; nor always, when we do. We may lament however, if we do not condemn the slaughter, the butchery of the human race, created after the image of God: nay, we may condemn it. It can hardly be necessary and just on both sides; perhaps it is on neither: and the authors, whosoever they be, must have much to answer for. It is boasted of one, that in the course of his wars he had slain three millions. You cannot compute beforehand how much mischief you let loose, when you open the doors of war. Happy are we, if we be but sensible of our happiness, in our pacific employments, and inferiour stations. How dangerous a thing is power! Success at last how fatal! It had

SERM.
XV.

Rev. vi.
14, &c. |

had been well for many a conqueror, if he had been cut off in his first battle, before he was intoxicated with his victories, or had acquired that habitual thirst for the destruction of his fellow creatures, which is called glory, but will cover him with everlasting confusion. *I beheld; and the heaven departed as a scroll, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.*

But whatever may be alleged by either party, in excuse of these disputes between nations; *private war*, which is waged between two particular members of the same civil community, who take the decision of their controversies, each of them into his own hand, and commit the arbitration of their differences to their own sword,

sword, must in all cases be looked upon as indefensible. If we have the benefit of living in society, we must submit to it's laws ; and be content with the regular and ordinary execution of justice, however imperfect or difficult to be obtained. There will be danger of great iniquity, if we attempt to supply the defects of civil justice, and help ourselves to a readier and ample reparation. To say nothing of the breach of publick peace, and the tumults and disorders thence naturally to be expected ; it is not equitable, that a man should be the judge of affronts and injuries done to himself : we may be sure, they will be over valued in such estimation. In the eye of the sufferer, and seen through the medium of prejudice and self love, offences soon swell to a vast size ; and any little neglect, or inconsiderate word, becomes a capital indignity.

But, besides that, *Christianity* requires of us forgiveness to a great extent ; *reason* will not authorize the gratification of resentment

SERM. sentiment for it's own sake : the pleasure
XV. of revenge, must not be allowed to be a
— just motive to any action.

The practice here censured is also *barbarous*, a custom unheard of among the wisest and politest nations. Ancient *Greece* and *Rome* were strangers to it; and at this day, it is unknown to the most civilized empires in the east. It is entirely a *Gothic* institution; which there is not so much as a pretence for retaining now, when it is divested of all it's authority and form, and no longer imagined by any one to be a test of *right*, or *innocence*.

And even as to *courage* itself, it does not consist all surely in quarrelling; but may be found in men of humane and gentle dispositions. Many have faced an enemy without fear, who never killed a friend: and some, who have acquired applause in these unlawful encounters, have nevertheless in the important hour of authorized battle, when magnanimity had been indeed

deed a virtue, shrunk into the most abject and shameful timidity, seeking a temporary safety in eternal dishonour, and betraying the name and glory, the possessions, power, and safety of their country.

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There is still remaining *one kind of murder* yet unmentioned; too shocking indeed to be mentioned, and contrary to the first and most universal principle in nature, which dictates to every creature the defence and preservation of *itself*: a murder, however, which has been but too often committed; and for which our own nation is eminently infamous. May God of his mercy keep us from the wretched end, and from the wicked life of the two traitors *Abithophel* and *Judas*; from the misery and madness, which lead the way to such a desperate act; and the unavailing remorse, and everlasting punishment, which, it is too probable, must follow! God keep us from all our enemies; and among that number, from *ourselves*! Alas! we are the worst; the only foes

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O

indeed,

SERM.

VX.

Pf. xliv. 4.
lxiii. 4.

Matt. viii.
12.
Mark ix.
44.

indeed, by whom we can be thus doubly injured, and plunged at once into the greatest guilt and suffering. A spiteful tongue robs us of our reputation, the thief takes our substance, the assassin our life; these are not however the greatest losses: our everlasting welfare is put into our own hands, and can never be wrested from us without our consent. The worst injury a man can suffer, is always his own act. Vice is voluntary: and it is this only can deprive us of *the light of that countenance, which is better than life; and deliver us up to eternal death; to that outer darkness, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

SER.

S E R M O N XVI.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 14.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

TH E Christian law of marriage which forbids polygamy, and allows not divorce but in the case of adultery, may be found perhaps a more equitable, and even merciful law, than some men seem to think it; indeed the more merciful, for these very restraints which appear so strict and rigorous.

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XVI.

Some regulation, it may be presumed, every person would acknowledge to be necessary: hardly will it be maintained, that there is no other rule of chastity than inclination. And if we must be confined within some limits; the narrowest, in this
O 2 instance,

SERM. instance, may be the most just, and most
 XVI. commodious.

In the first place, we may venture to assert, that, though the Christian precept should not be deducible from the light of reason, it is at least not contrary to it; if it be not enjoined by the dictates of nature, it is as conformable to them, as any other law would be.

Sura. iv. 3.

Marry wives, says the law of Mahomet, *two, three, or four*. But why, we may ask, so many? or why no more? What reason, when we have once begun to number, for stopping exactly in this place? Indeed this precept of the *Koran* has admitted of a latitude in the interpretation; and however precise the words of the command, the practice is by no means confined within the bounds prescribed.

Secondly, the number of males and females brought into the world, according

ing to the course of *nature* established by Almighty God, is not greatly unequal: which is some intimation, that the allotment He intended, was that of one, to one. There seems to be no opportunity for polygamy, without danger of injustice.

Experience also strengthens these apprehensions. In those countries, where the greatest latitude is allowed in marriage, there is the greatest oppression in government: in order to maintain an indulgence, for which nature has not made provision, and to secure to a few persons a licentious intercourse with the other sex, a great part of our own is enslaved and mutilated.

Thirdly, suppose we knew no more, than that Almighty God, in the beginning, made a human pair, one man and one woman, to be the parents of the whole race: this single fact, would it not be a kind of *precept*? an admonition to us, what is the most suitable to our
O 3 nature,

SERM. nature, in the estimation of him that
 XVI. made us ?

But when we find it the *declared will*
 Gen. ii. 24. of our Creator, that *a man shall leave his*
father and mother, and shall cleave unto
his wife, and they shall be one flesh, we
 must own it clearly taught, as our Lord
 himself indeed explains it, that this so-
 ciety was originally meant to compre-
 hend but two persons, and be compleat-
 ed between them ; and that, at the
 very first marriage, *polygamy* was for-
 bidden.

Divorce too, at least for every little
 reason, for fancy, disgust, or a new affec-
 tion, is comprehended under the same
 prohibition : nothing indeed less than un-
 faithfulness, a violation of what is most
 essential in this contract, it may fairly be
 inferred, will justify the dissolution of
 so strict an union, established by such
 authority.

Difficulties

Difficulties there will be always: many occasions of self-denial will meet us, whatever course we take; and they will meet us the oftener, the more anxiously we strive to shun them. There may also be cases, where particular persons are found to suffer by regulations, which yet are for the good of the whole: but the question is, whether, as a general institution, the perpetuity of the marriage-contract be not beneficial to mankind.

We have in our composition a principle, to which we are much indebted: use makes easy to us many things, which we fancy intolerable: we learn first to acquiesce in what we cannot alter, and then to like what we are accustomed to. The desire of change requires some probability of success, to keep it alive and active: our wishes must be fed with hopes, to become strong enough to disturb us; they decay naturally and are extinguished, when we are once tho-

SERM. roughly persuaded, that they cannot pos-
XVI. sibly be gratified.

How many desires are thus checked, and strangled in the birth; which might have grown up to an enormous strength, and proved fatal to those that conceived them! What conflagrations had arisen from sparks, which are thus happily extinguished! It is a kindness, to keep us back from these great dangers; to shut us up in a secure and quiet haven; and not to suffer us to expose ourselves to the perilous conflict with boisterous passions, and a restless curiosity.

If we permit fancy to be our leader, there will be no end of it's rambling: licentiousness knows no bounds. Were the laws altered, were Christianity abolished, and two, or three, or a greater number of wives allowed; even this large liberty might prove unsatisfactory. Something forbidden will be still left to
create

create a new longing: a depraved appetite can find no sweetness, but in that which is denied.

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And this disposition is seen in other passions.

Haman went forth joyful, and with a glad heart. But when he saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation.—And Haman told of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things, wherein the king had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.—Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.—One, little, insignificant sacrifice refused to his vanity, destroyed the relish of every other gratification. To persons, whose minds are engrossed by any excessive passion, the abundance they possess is nothing, the trifle wanted employs all their thoughts.

Naboth

SERM.

XVI.

* 1 Kings
xxi.

* *Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it. And Naboth said, the Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee. And Ahab came to his house heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth had spoken to him; and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would not eat bread.—* Shall we only say? men are found to want equally with a great deal, as with a little; Or may we not add? that this very abundance, is the real source of their necessities; or at least of the exquisite misery, which they feel under them. To fall sick for a garden of herbs, a man must be King over ten of the tribes of Israel.

But we need not go so far for arguments;

ments; or illustrate the insatiable nature of one irregular desire, by comparisons drawn from others: let us venture nearer to our subject; and take one example from Scripture, out of many, of the same perverseness, in the very passion we are treating of.

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XVI.

There were two men in one city: the one 2 Sam. xii,
rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that came unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

The offender in this sad, cruel instance,
had

SERM.
XVI.

had already many, both wives and concubines. But all is too little. Nothing is acceptable, but the wife of another man, a faithful subject, a brave soldier, absent from his own family, enduring hardships, and braving death in his service.

The allowance of polygamy and concubinage, as we see by this example, is no security against the sin of adultery; and perhaps might not so much as lessen the temptation to it. For although it is very possible, that these liberties might prevent the transgression, in some particular instances; yet they might also, on the other hand, create or inflame that vehemence of a pampered appetite, and rage of roving fancy, which is so unreasonable and dangerous, and is never to be satisfied with indulgence. Did ever a miser long less for gold, because he had already too much? Did ever an ambitious man arrive at the extent of his wishes? He imagines, perhaps, that
he

he sees some end of his desires, and that the next accession of power, which he has in view, shall be the utmost he will ever aim at: but he finds, that the horizon retires before him, and will stand still only when he ceases to pursue it.

SERM.

XVI.

Nothing has been said of that perpetual uncertainty and disquiet, those jealousies and contests, those innumerable and endless distractions, which will be found attendants on polygamy and divorce; except you imitate the example of those nations, who seclude the whole female sex, in a manner, from all society with the other; and keep them imprisoned, like slaves or criminals; adding thus cruelty to unkindness, and maintaining injustice by tyranny.

But, to conclude with what was observed before, irregularity has naturally no limits: one excess draws on another; indeed in all vices whatever, but in none more

SERM. more eminently than in that corrupt
XVI. disposition, which we are now considering. Observe how some of the fairest fruits are easily preserved in perfect soundness; but when once they are touched and tainted with the slightest beginnings of decay, how hastily, in spite of all your efforts, they dissolve into rottenness. The most easy therefore, as well as the most excellent way of being virtuous, is to be so entirely.

Impetuous appetite and blind fancy must be stopt in their career, or they will hurry us to destruction: it is our highest wisdom to restrain them, before they have carried us to a single step beyond the line of innocence and safety.

S E R M O N XVII.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

I P E T E R ii. 11.

DEARLY BELOVED, I BESEECH YOU AS
STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN
FROM FLESHLY LUSTS.

IT is very proper to examine into the reasons, and see the utility of the precepts of Christianity. Not that our compliance is always to depend upon the issue of such inquiries. We are not in the place of lawgivers, but subjects; and may have a very sufficient reason for our obedience, though we should discern none for the commandment.

SERM.
XVII.

Most of the Christian laws indeed are plainly the laws of reason and nature: the very same things precisely are enjoined, which would have been our duty, had the Gospel been silent. If there be any difference between them, there is no contradiction.

SERM. diction. Christianity never requires any
XVII. thing, which is forbidden by the voice of
nature ; never forbids, what that enjoins :
yet it may command certain actions, concerning which the law of nature is silent ; or it may prohibit, what that permits.

Nor let it appear strange that there are duties, which, though conformable to our best reason, seem not rigorously prescribed and commanded by it ; virtues, which the law of nature would rather applaud, than require ; and restraints, which, like a tender guardian, she may not chuse to impose, but would be well pleased to see us submit to.

The *doctrines* of Christianity, such as the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the clear prospect of happiness or misery after death to all eternity, tend to turn away our thoughts and cares from this present world : and can it be any wonder, if some of its *precepts* be found to exact a greater degree of disregard

disregard for the things on earth, and of affection for those above, than what was either likely to be found, or was generally called for under less enlightened dispensations? *The times of heathen ignorance God winked at.* To the Jews he gave some precepts, because they were not then able to bear better: *but now he commandeth all men every where to repent; and to be perfect, even as their Father in heaven is perfect.*

SERM.

XVII.

Acts xvii.
30.

Matth. v.
48.

Because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. Before the flood, we read but of one person who had two wives: some of the Patriarchs took more. The Jewish law was very favourable to the men; if liberty in this case be a favour. Not that every liberty, seemingly allowed by it, was therefore always innocent. There is room for great wrong within the letter of the law. And after all the concessions of

Matt. xix.
8.

SERM.
XVII.

Mal. ii.
16.

Moses in favour of divorce, we find one of the Prophets altogether condemning the whole practice ; *Take heed,—and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth ; for the Lord the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away.*

Among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, though the laws, or at least the practice might be different at different periods of time ; yet in general, Polygamy was forbidden, Divorce allowed : and even the *women* were admitted to the participation of this liberty ; as is indeed implied in that passage of St. Paul, where he dissuades both parties from the use of it.

1 Cor. vii.
12, 13.

If any brother hath a wife, that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. Yet in the earliest and most virtuous times of the Romans,

The Christian Rule of Chastity.

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Romans *, to the credit of the republick, no man ever was known to put away his wife: no woman attempted to leave her husband.

SERM.
XVII.

† The sister of Herod the Great, is said to have been the first woman among the Jews, that took upon her to divorce her husband; learning this lesson from the Greeks and Romans.

But whatever liberty the laws of particular nations, or that of nature might allow, the Christian rule is this, *To avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband:—let not the wife depart from her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife.*

1 Cor. vii.
2, 10.

* Plutarch, in Theseus and Romulus.

† Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 15. c. 7.—*πέρπει μὲν εὐδὺς αὐτῷ γραμμάτων, ἀπολυμένη τὸν γάμον, ἢ κατὰ τὰς Ἰουδαίας νόμους.*

SERM.
XVII.

Deut. xxii.
22.

The punishment of adultery, by the laws of many civilized nations, and even by the divine law given to the Jews, was *death*; and that to both the parties concerned in the offence. *If a man be found lying with a woman, married to a husband, then they shall both of them die.* Let us not imagine the guilt to be no longer the same, because the penalty is apparently lessened: it is not lessened; but only delayed, and reserved to be inflicted with more certainty and severity by other hands: *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

Heb. xiii.
4.

1 Theff. iv.
3.

By the Christian law, *fornication* is forbidden, as well as adultery. *For this is the will of God, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

We need not proceed to enumerate other transgressions of Christian chastity, less, or greater than these; or compute the degrees of aggravation, that may be
in

in each of them. He is the *wisest* in this case, who is the most ignorant. It were some offence, to look narrowly into such subjects : and of what use, alas ! to adjust the difference of vices, which are all inconsistent with a state of salvation ? For hear the sentence of the great Apostle : *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,—and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. — For this ye know, that no whore-monger, nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* And then, to cut short all disputes on this subject, and stop at once the mouths of such cavillers, who are furnished with objections by their lusts, and find it easier to argue than obey ; he adds, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

SERM.

XVII.

Gal. v. 19,
&c.

Ephes. v. 5.

Ephes. v.
6.

SERM.

XVII.

In the sin of *adultery* indeed, there are many great aggravations of guilt. The wrong is not only grievous, but irreparable.

It is an *ungenerous* thing, and the sign of a merciless, and therefore mean disposition, for the gratification of a wanton appetite, to rob an innocent man, perhaps a neighbour, perhaps a friend, of the comfort and happiness of all his life.

It is an *affront* and insult; to be computed according to the estimation of the sufferer. Such dishonour is death to him: and may be so to *you*; at least if the person whom you thus injure, have no greater government of *his* passions, than what he may learn from your example: *For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*

Prov. vi.
34.

There is also *perjury* in adultery; it is the breach and violation both of a *contract*,

tract, and a *vow* : it is an offence directly against God, as well as man ; and at the same time, and in a high degree, both immoral, and impious.

SERM.
XVII.

But the greatness of one vice is no vindication of another. The practice, and I had almost said, *trade*, which is carried on by the dissolute, of seducing, betraying, and consigning to infamy and wretchedness, the young, the innocent, and unwary, has guilt enough of it's own, without entering into comparisons to render it truly diabolical.

Every *species* of impurity hath it's peculiar features of malignity ; all sufficiently odious, and detestable. Let them dispute among themselves the shameful pre-eminence : turn we our eyes away from all such objects ; and let us beseech Almighty God to pour into our hearts, *the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable* : that we may each of us *know how to possess this vessel of the body in*

James iii.
17.

1 Thess. iv.
4, 5.

SERM. *Sanctification and honour; not in the lust of*
XVII. *concupiscence, as those that know not God;*

that we may be the temple of the Holy
Ghost; that He may delight to dwell in
us; and that we may never incur the
punishment denounced in that awful
threatening, If any man defile the temple
of God, him shall God destroy.

I Cor. iii.
17.

S E R M O N XVIII.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 15.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

BUT, *what! is thy servant a dog? said*
Hazeal to the weeping Prophet, who
was recounting to him the instances of
his future cruelty: *I know the evil that*
thou wilt do unto the children of Israel;
their young men wilt thou slay with the
sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip
up their women with child: And he said,
But what! is thy servant a dog, that he
should do this?

SERM.
XVIII.

2 Kings
viii. 12, 13.

When we are to address ourselves to a
congregation of Christians, and especially
to persons of some rank or character, of
a birth or education above the level of the
vulgar;

SERM.

XVIII.

vulgar ; and we produce with all solemnity for the subject of our counsels, such a passage of Scripture as this, *Thou shalt not steal* ; a spark of displeasure may possibly be awakened in a person disposed to take offence, *Am I a dog, that I should do this ?* Are we fallen so very low in the estimation of the preacher ? Are we thought not only so depraved and wicked, but so mean and base, as to stand in need of exhortations to honesty, and a discourse against theft ? Room there is enough for our amendment ; but we are clear at least of this contemptible sin, and in no danger, we should presume, of offending against the *eighth* commandment.

The commandments are conceived mostly in concise terms ; but the meaning is extensive. When we read, *Thou shalt not steal*, all manner of injustice and wrong, every thing contrary to any law, divine or human, to reason, religion, or humanity, affecting the *property* of another, is to be understood as forbidden :
and

and if we follow this idea but a little way, we shall find, that to steal is a thing more common in the world, than is supposed; and that those persons many times, who are shocked at the *word*, are yet intimate with the *offence*, and deeply guilty of the very crime which they abhor.

SERM.

XVIII.

To *rob*, you will acknowledge, is a vice, that ranks with great propriety under this class: the injury is not the less, because it is attended with violence. There are some remains of shame, and fear, the two guardians of virtue, in those who pilfer only in private; and are not yet hardened to such a degree, as to offer open wrong, and avow their injustice.

But robbery also you detest, as much as theft; and find as little occasion upon this head either for reproof or counsel—It is true: in private persons, and in little instances, this vice too is dishonourable; but is it always so esteemed in cases of greater consequence, and where it is worse?

SERM.

XVIII.

worse? The plundering of a province shall be a famous exploit, when that of a single house is a capital crime: and the invasion of a kingdom, though founded in wrong, and accompanied with terrible barbarities, yet takes it's name from the event, and if it be successful, is always glorious.

But neither shall we need to dwell upon this particular. It is a transgression of the law now before us; but, however truly to be lamented, and strictly to be answered for, is not likely to come into *our* account. We cannot aspire to the commission of such great crimes: it is a guilt above the reach of our ambition. And so far it is well: Happy were it for us, if either our situation or temper, if any principles, or motives, or means whatever would secure us with equal efficacy against other vices, or from all other transgressions even of this very commandment.

For,

For, *thirdly*, as robbery, and that highest species of robbery, unjust war, are offences against this law; so also is *oppression*, every encroachment of the rich and powerful upon the possessions or services of their inferiours or dependants.

SERM.

XVIII.

And this offence, it is to be feared, may be of a complexion more familiar to us. Alas! where almost, may we ask, shall we find the person who will restrain himself, when he cannot be resisted? who wilt not lean a little, and be partial towards his own side, when there is nothing but *reason* to be urged against him? Here is the touchstone of *sincerity*, the trial of true virtue. Let me see the man, who can attend without a monitor to the whisper of equity; who is an advocate with himself for every one, who has a claim upon him; who sees his own cause with the same eye, with which he looks upon that of another; his own reasons, not magnified by self-interest, another person's, not diminished by inability to maintain them; who can
be

SERM.
XVIII.

be opposed by his inferiours, and feel no resentment; speak without harshness, to such as must not answer him; be gentle, where he might be insolent with safety; civil, to those he has obliged; pleased, with such as have expectations from him; attending to considerations, of which he is not to be reminded; imposing no hardships, where they must be borne; and offering no insults, when they cannot be returned; in a word, give me the man who finds no inducement to do wrong, in the power of doing it; and I will pronounce him a master in all the virtues and duties, which belong to the intercourse of men with each other: reason requires nothing more of him; and he is perfect in that precept of the gospel, which comprehends the law and the prophets, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*

Matth. vii.
12.

But this character, as it is excellent, so is it proportionably rare. For as the Apostle asks, *Do not rich men oppress you, and*

James ii. 6.

and draw you before the judgment seats?

SERM.

XVIII.

Not indeed now, to molest you in the profession of your *faith*; a point concerning which they are not apt to be anxious, either for you or themselves; but in your *property* perhaps, which you are as loth to part with. The benefit of the *laws*, in many cases, cannot be obtained easily: if you will have justice, you must pay for it. When rich men therefore, taking advantage of this difficulty, withhold your right, under colour of referring it to the law, they rob; when under the protection of their own greatness, or of immunities meant for better purposes, they refuse, or but delay to comply with the most equitable obligations, they steal.

If *magistrates* pervert, or refuse, or delay justice: if they sell it, or load it with unnecessary expence or difficulties, when it is already so grievously overcharged with them; their injustice is worse than that of others, in as much as it is aggravated by breach of trust, and treachery;

SERM. chery ; it is a robbery committed by
XVIII. a *guardian*.

But these acts of oppression, I hope, are uncommon : there are other abuses of power, of an inferiour class indeed, and less importance, singly taken, but making up, it is to be feared, in number what they want in weight.

For the descent is gradual through the several stations of human life, there is a continued succession and chain of pre-eminence and subjection down to the very lowest : and when we abuse our superiority, of whatever species or degree, and have recourse to our own little greatness to support us in doing wrong ; we commit the double offence of dishonesty and oppression ; and if we take advantage in any case of a person's distress and necessities, we swell the reckoning yet further, by adding cruelty to the number of our transgressions.

It

It is a further degree, or even a higher species of oppression, of which, some are said to be guilty ; not indeed in this Island, but in countries subject to the government of Great-Britain. They who are slaves there, if a late Author may be credited *, *endure a slavery more compleat, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time.*—The most consummate and perfect example of oppression and inhumanity has been reserved then, it seems, to be exhibited in these enlightened times, by the subjects of this *free and Christian* nation ! Let us turn our eyes for relief to some ordinary wickedness.

A man may be guilty of cruel injustice, in demanding no more than his own. If a creditor require only so much, as is really due to him ; yet if he do it at a

* Account of the European settlements in America.

SERM.
XVIII.

Matth.
xviii. 32.

time, which, though legal, is not reasonable, or in a grievous manner; and, still worse, if his design be not so much to secure his own right, as to ruin his adversary, he is to be ranked with the most injurious oppressors; except we can think an injury is the less, because it is owing to revenge instead of avarice. To such a person as this, in its full strength belongs the parable of our Lord, and the threatening that follows it. *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

Matth. v.
21.

Revenge indeed and malice fall properly under the *sixth* commandment, according to the decision of our Lord, *He that*

Against Oppression.

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that hateth his brother is a murderer.

SERM.

There he is supposed to intend or wish evil to his brother's person; and here his designs are upon his property. The whole tribe of sciences and of virtues, are so nearly related, that it has been held, no person can be possessed absolutely of any one, without some acquaintance with every other: we cannot then be surprised to find the several vices also, to which the heart of man is subject, contiguous; and, like the colours in the rainbow, mingling imperceptibly with each other.

XVIII.

1 John iii.
15.

S E R M O N X I X .

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

LEVIT. xix. 11.

NEITHER DEAL FALSELY, NEITHER LIE
ONE TO ANOTHER.

ACTS of injustice are most likely to
be committed, and they are most
to be dreaded, when supported by power,
or borrowing strength from some supe-
riority, whether of riches, credit, or
station.

SERM.
XIX.

But the commission of injustice is not
confined to the higher orders of men in
the community, nor learned only from
rank and dignity: wrongs can be done
by the feeblest hands, and are to be fear-
ed from the lowest persons by the most
powerful.

Q. 3

And

SERM.

XIX.

And some who have travelled, and had an opportunity of comparing the manners of other countries with our own, have observed, that whereas people are in most places trampled on by their betters, and *return*, if we may so speak, the ill treatment, on others still below them; in *England*, on the contrary, the abuse begins at the bottom, and is carried *upwards* through all orders, successively to the very highest; there prevailing among us universally, such an impatience of authority and restraint, such a disposition to molest and pull down those above us, as is not to be found in any other nation.

No sooner is any person, for his merit or abilities, or by his industry, or even by the general voice, and as it were at the command of the publick, advanced to any eminent degree of authority and greatness; but instantly, every virtue disappears: he is no longer thought deserving of promotion, only because he has obtained it; he is attacked with
obloquy

obloquy from every quarter; and that breath of popular favour, by which he was driven forwards, on a sudden, is both turned against him, and swelled up into a storm,

SERM.

XIX.

Nor does this extreme hardship and injustice attend only on the most eminent stations: the same principles work proportionably in lower instances; as a clod of earth falls to the ground, by the operation of the same cause, that keeps the planets in their orbits.

As the great sometimes are tempted to oppression, through a consciousness of their own power, and a contempt of the claims of mean persons; so on the other hand, there are numbers of people of the lower class, who think it is but a little sin to steal from those who have abundance. *Injuries are as they are felt; What is a rich Lord the worse, for the want of such a trifle as will maintain my poor family?*

SERM.

XIX.

Even the *Clergy* not unfrequently receive the same compliment; and sometimes, when it is not due to them: they have the honour to be ranked among those, who can bear to be pillaged, and may be injured without injustice.

This plea, or one very like it, is made still more use of, and alleged with more confidence, when the thing unjustly retained or taken, is the property of a *society*.

But the *publick*, far beyond all private persons, lies always open to these iniquitous depredations, and is attacked without mercy, from every quarter; as if it were of a constitution incapable of suffering, or there were nothing criminal, in doing injuries to a whole community.

But besides the acts of injustice which we are guilty of towards our superiours, or those, whom we are pleased to view in
that

that light, there are others, which are done amongst *equals*, or persons considered as such; where the inequality of the two parties, comes not in as a motive to the injury, being neither the encouragement on the one side to oppression, nor the temptation to fraud on the other.

SERM.

XIX.

These belong to such branches of the intercourse, which men have with each other, where the *traffick* is supposed to be on even terms, for the equal benefit of both parties. *As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.*

Ecclus.
xxvii. 2.

We need not descend to particulars: much penetration is not necessary to judge of these things, but a fair and equitable disposition. Acuteness of understanding is seldom wanted, except to palliate what is wrong. Whatever is *understood* to be right by both parties, is so: and when they differ, it is mostly
con-

SERM. concerning the *facts*, rarely about the
XIX. *principles* they ought to act upon.

A great variety of cases will occur; in which, as a fair and honest disposition may give proof of it's integrity, so he who has a tendency to double dealing, will find opportunities in abundance to deceive himself, as well as those that deal with him. He will have a thousand apologies to allege, and be able to raise arguments in his own defence, which it may require some skill to answer, and yet but a little honesty to despise. For certain truths are easier to understand, and feel, than to explain. And if you can once bear to deliberate, and begin to *reason* about a piece of profitable villany, the odds are great that you *conclude* at last to commit it.

We need not add surely upon this subject, that all *falsehood* is forbidden. It sinks a tradesman, or any man down to a low rank, when he submits to this practice;

practice; and on any occasion, or in any manner, transgresses the bounds of truth. We may safely pronounce all That to be stolen, which is gained by *lying*.

SERM.

XIX.

The like might be said in the case of *contracts* of every sort, when fraudulently made, or not performed faithfully; of *breaches of trust* reposed in us, either by express agreement, or tacit consent; and in short, of every *advantage* we take over another person, by which we deprive him of any part of his substance, in violation of law, justice, equity, truth, or reason.

But there is no necessity to prosecute these things particularly: for it is not instruction or skill, that is requisite; but rather, on the contrary, *Simplicity and* 2 Cor. i. 12, *godly sincerity*, the reverse of *fleshly wisdom*. An honest mind is the best instructor, and will teach us beyond a thousand casuists. *It is joy to the just to do judgment:* he Prov. xxi. 15, who truly loves that which is just and equal, and from his heart desires another's

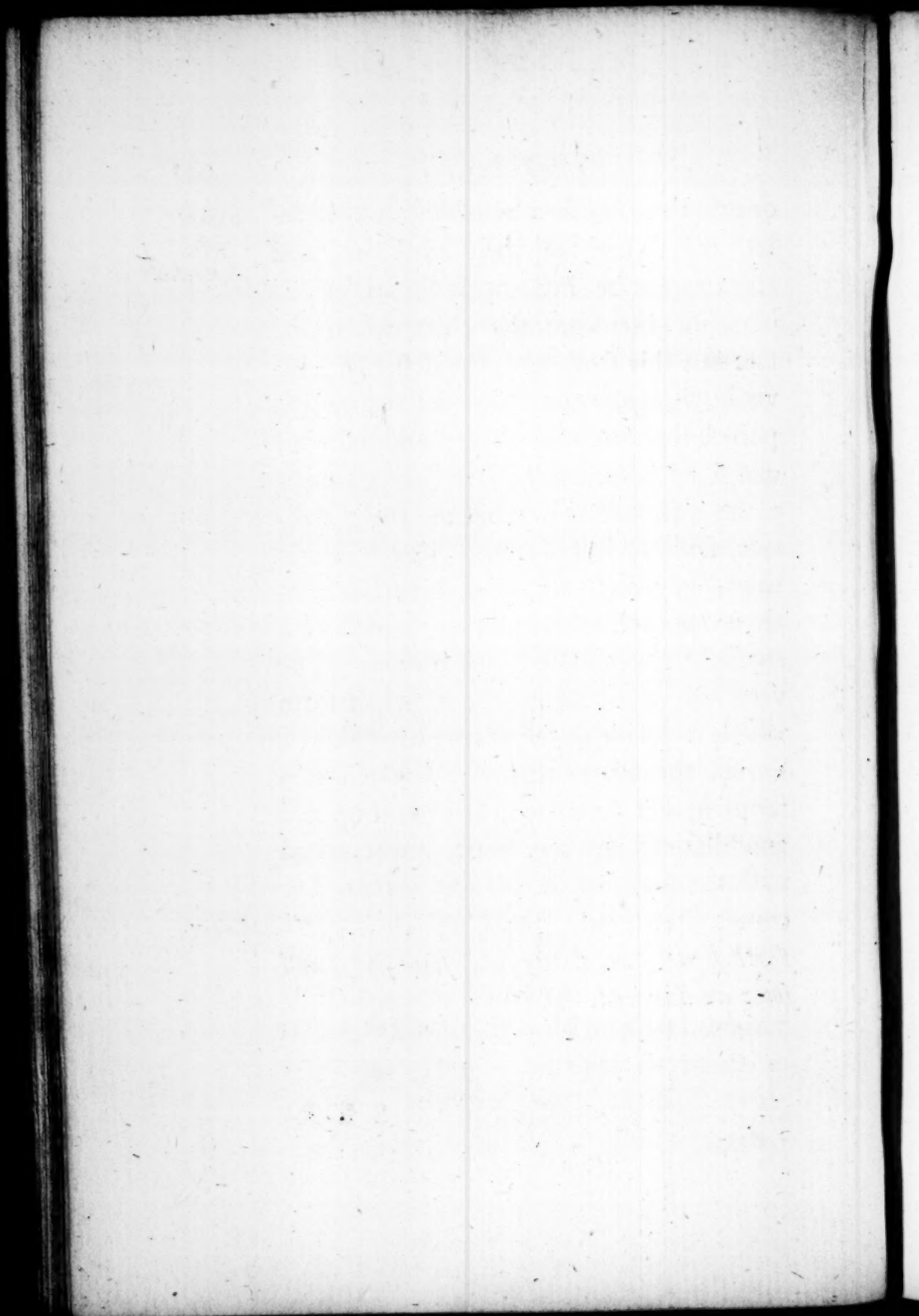
SERM. ther's welfare as his own, may be depend-
 XIX. ed on ; and he alone : he has a principle
 — within him, a secret power, a *magnet* that
 will be an infallible director ; and turn
 him true and sure to the point of right,
 amidst all the darkness of disputation, and
 all the attractions of self-interest.

Vice has often been compared to a
 noxious weed, of a quick, alas ! and con-
 tinual growth : and we are perpetually
 employed, we labourers in this *moral*
 field, to check it. We offer men reasons
 to set against inclination, we oppose duty
 to interest ; hoping to put some stop to
 the particular transgressions at least that
 are most predominant : but they spring
 up again in opposition to all our la-
 bours ; and the rank harvest grows under
 the hands of the reaper.

Colos. iii. 2. *Set your affection on things above, not
 on things on earth.* Could men be brought
 to alter the object of their desires, the
 task of reformation would be all done at
 once ;

once; their conduct would follow of itself the change of their affections, and there would be little need for us to explain or inculcate the commandments. Let but this sentiment, the desire of heavenly things, enter into the heart, and possess the dominion there; and no vice can stand before it. Every irregular appetite and passion, ambition, envy, avarice, selfishness; all those corrupt affections, by which we are led to be injurious to each other, are consumed in a moment by this *fire from heaven*. The very root of injustice, the principle from which it springs, the means by which it grows, the whole matter by which it is supplied and nourished, are burnt up and annihilated; and the heart, impregnated with the seeds of grace, and virtue, becomes that *Good ground, which bringeth forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.*

Mark iv.
20.



S E R M O N XX.

NINTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

E X O D. xx. 16.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS
AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

IT doth not *, I think, appear, that
the testimony of a witness, according
to the law of Moses, was to be delivered
upon oath. His serious asseveration was
however accompanied, according to the
usage of those times, with the solemnity
of some significant action.

SERM.
XX.

*At the mouth of two witnesses, or three
witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death
be put to death; but at the mouth of one
witness he shall not be put to death. The
hands of the witnesses shall be first upon
him*

Deut. xvii.
6, 7.

* Levit. v. 1. may be understood of the Criminal.

SERM. *him to put him to death, and afterward the*
 XX. *hands of all the people.—* If thy brother*

* Deut. xiii.
 6, 9.

entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and
serve other Gods—thou shalt surely kill
him: thine hand shall be first upon him to
put him to death, and afterwards the hand
of all the people. It seems, as if the wit-
 nesses gave the first blow to the criminal;
 and that this was at the same time both
 the signal, and, as it were, the warrant
 for his execution. When St. Stephen
 was stoned, it was at St. Paul's feet that
 Acts vii. 58. *the witnesses laid down their clothes; which*
they put off, we may suppose, to make
themselves the readier to perform that
office.

It is to this practice our Lord alludes,
 in his sentence on the woman taken in
 adultery; and his decision, which is every
 way admirable, receives an additional pro-
 priety from this allusion: *He that is with-*
 John vii. 7. *out sin among you, let him first cast the stone*
 Τὸν ἁγίου. *at her.*

With us indeed and other nations, false testimony hath, for many ages, been accompanied with *false swearing*: and this, no doubt, is an aggravation of the offence.

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XX.

God hath said, that he *will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain*; intimating, perhaps, that he may delay the punishment; asserting strongly, that he will inflict it. The offender may escape for a time, and seem to triumph in his impunity; but he is all the while under a curse, by which he is faster held, than by a thousand bars. This sentence of God, like a drawn sword, hangs trembling over his head, and *will cut him in sunder in a day when he looketh not for it, at an hour when he is not ware.*

Luke xii.
46.

And as he, who taketh God's name in vain, *shall not be held guiltless*, so we find a like threatening denounced against the other part of this complicated offence; *a false witness shall not be unpunished.* There

SERM.
XX.

Exod. xx. 7.

Prov. xix.

5.

לא ינקו

is not only a force and emphasis in this form of expression, but such a resemblance also to the other threatening, as is remarkable; *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.—He shall not be unpunished.* *Guiltless*, and *unpunished*, under God's just government agree, no doubt, in their import; at least they will be found to do so at the consummation of all things, when He shall *render to every man according to his works*. But in this case, the very language is not different: it is the same word in both these places in the original.

False testimony draws after it also by *human laws* a punishment considerable, and with us very ignominious: but yet not always, it must be acknowledged, proportionable to the malignity and mischief of the offence, or to the punishment which is inflicted for other crimes less atrocious in themselves, and less detrimental to the publick. Of this the legislature are not ignorant: they have
their

their reasons, we may be sure, for this lenity ; and regard probably what is convenient and practicable, as well as what is just. The office of an *informer*, however sometimes necessary, is disagreeable and invidious ; and should not, it is thought, be overcharged with difficulties and danger ; innumerable crimes, even as the law now stands, escaping punishment, merely because no one is willing to be the witness *against* them, though *of* them, alas ! we are all witnesses.

Those who make a trade of accusing, were always, and must be ever odious : but to prosecute and bring to publick justice, some great and powerful offender, was esteemed honourable in the commonwealths of Greece and Rome, and was often the first step to advancement.

The punishment appointed for false testimony has been * *death* : but the most

* Ut qui falsum testimonium dixisset, e saxo Tarpeio deiceretur. XII. Tab.

SERM.

XX.

Deut. xix.
16.

most natural and equitable punishment, (which also appears to have been inflicted in some † nations, and in the ‡ Roman government at a certain period) is that which the law of Moses prescribes. *If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him that which is wrong; then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests, and the judges which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition; and behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. So shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall*

In France, I suppose in some cases only, this crime is said to be now capital. Montef. Spir. of Laws. Book 29. Chap. 11.

† Diod. Sic. Lib. 1.—Οἱ δὲ ψευδῶς τινῶν κατηγορήσαντες ὥφειλον τῦτο παθεῖν, ὃ τοῖς συκοφαντηθεῖσιν ἐτίταλτο.

‡ Cum calumniantes ad vindictam poscat similitudo supplicii. C. 9 a. 17.

shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

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And were it not a matter of extreme difficulty to pronounce concerning the utility of laws, without the experience of them; one would think, that, as the severest punishment of wilful false testimony would be no more than just; so it would be the most likely to advance the cause of truth and justice, and the happiness of every nation in the world.

For the crime surely is of the deepest dye; as wicked and as hurtful as can well be committed. Indeed it is not easy to imagine a greater degree of depravity, than goes to the commission of this offence; or a complication of more grievous sins, than are comprehended in it.

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For, to pass by the perjury, which belongs to this offence but by accident, and has been already mentioned; first, it is *murder*, or *robbery*, (as the case may happen to be;) and that more grievous, than if done by open violence, as loading the innocent with disgrace and infamy.

Secondly, It is a violation of *truth*. And this surely is no small part of every crime into which it enters. An act of injustice or cruelty, when it is joined with treachery, or brought about by falsehood and fraud, is doubly detestable, and raises our indignation to the highest pitch.

Thirdly, False testimony is peculiarly injurious to *society*. The immediate object of the crime, is far from being the only sufferer: the state itself is hurt; and that not merely by the loss of a single member, if that be the consequence; but it receives, as it were, a wound in it's
vital

vital parts. For the administration of publick justice, is the very life of civil society: it's Being depends upon it: if this be destroyed, we fall back that moment into a state of nature. Now false testimony, in every instance, interrupts this administration of justice; and would stop it entirely, were it universally prevalent. A judge does not see every thing with his own eyes; he can only execute the laws, by giving credit to the witnesses: truth, and civil society must expire together.

Solemn false testimony is an offence, that must always be *deliberate* and premeditated. It is not the effect of any sudden transport or gust of passion, but shews a temper resolutely corrupt, and hardened in wickedness.

Lastly, for what need to pursue this hateful offence through all it's aggravations? it requires a degree of *impudence*, and meanness, a strength of forehead,

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and baseness of heart, that can only belong to the very worst, the vilest and most abandoned character : so that if some other crimes were as pernicious as this, yet hardly could any be so odious. A bold usurper, a bloody tyrant, is advanced, no doubt, to a high pitch of wickedness : yet even he is able to inspire us with some degree of reverence for his authority or accomplishments, and force us to mix respect with our abhorrence of him. But his spies and his sycophants, the tools with which he does his work, and who are so ready ever to testify what it is convenient for him to have believed, (though it is not always believed,) these are yet more execrable : the two extremities of aversion are united in our sentiments of them ; and they are, at the same time, the most terrible, and most contemptible.

S E R.

S E R M O N XXI.

NINTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

P R O V. x. 18.

HE THAT UTTERETH A SLANDER, IS A
FOOL.

IN the large field of falsehood, there is room for a multitude of offences, not so terribly eminent as that lie, which we confirm by oath, and deliver solemnly in a court of justice.

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XI.

The *first*, however, approaches towards it; the *calumny*, which is known to be false, and spoken with a design to do mischief. The name of God, I grant, is not profaned; it is also something, that the very place and forms of justice, are not defiled and prostituted: in other respects, the injustice is much the same; and the

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stroke, sometimes, as heavy as that which is given by the hand of the *executioner*.

Reputation, of all possessions, is the most valuable, next to a *good conscience*; to which indeed it of right belongs, and from which it naturally springs. The *root* lies out of the reach of injury: Your innocence, by God's grace, no one can take from you, without your own consent: but the fruit of a *fair reputation*, so beautiful, and fragrant, and in all respects so precious, this, alas! hangs exposed to the assault of every passenger: the lowest, as he goes along, can fling a stone upwards, and laugh to see the prize fall, though he cannot gather it.

It is an aggravation of the crime, or at least of the folly of calumny, that commonly there is *nothing to be gained* by the commission of it. *Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul, when he is hungry; but, if he be found, he shall restore seven fold; he shall give all the*

substance of his house. But he who steals away your reputation, has no pretence to the plea of necessity; since what he takes away from another, does not therefore fall into his own hands; and when he has ruined you by the robbery, he himself is no richer.

We have an account somewhere, of a certain tribe of *Savages*, who are possessed of a persuasion, that, whenever they have slain a man, they are immediately endowed with all his good qualities; which they think are transfused from the soul of the dead, into the person that has killed him. You will not wonder, that murders are frequent in that country; and that it is very dangerous for a man of merit, to be found unguarded among people of such principles.

Having established in our own thoughts a kind of competition with those around us, and rivalry for respect and credit, we are apt to flatter ourselves, that we are
the

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the better for their shame, and the more respected when they are ill thought of; we hope to appropriate to ourselves, the honour which others lose, and inherit the applauses they possess no longer.

But we are much mistaken in our conclusions. For, not to urge the danger of *reprisals*, which may be made upon us with equal success, and perhaps more justice; this *very temper* and practice, if our enemies have nothing more to allege against us, is of itself one of the heaviest imputations: and while we put it in their power to say so much ill of us truly, we pursue the very worst measures in the world for a good character, whether to deserve or gain it.

Nor is this only one great blemish in our reputation, and an inducement to our enemies to look out for more; but it is also a sure symptom, that they will *find* them. A disposition to calumny is too bad a thing, to be the only thing in us that

that is bad: a vice of that distinction, cannot be without a large retinue.

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XXI.

At least, there will hardly be found in it's company, any quality highly good and excellent. Eminent merit can shine without a foil; it needs no such helps, and condescends not to make use of them; but it is well pleased with whatever is well done, and ready and delighted to do justice to the excellencies of others.

A mind truly great, recommends and brings forward what is deserving of encouragement; and being rich in praise, can bestow it liberally, without any fear of impoverishment.

But, besides the mere desire of doing mischief, which is *malice*; or the desire of doing it to those above us, which is *envy*; or to those who have offended us, which is *revenge*; and besides also the more general endeavour to depress others in order to raise ourselves the higher, which is the
mistaken

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mistaken effort of a very mean *ambition*; there is yet another principle, which is apt to lead us into the same offence; and becomes one cause of that calumny, which springs from so many sources.

We have all a desire to be agreeable to our companions; and finding, that conversation is never so well relished, as when seasoned with slander; what can we do, but conform to the taste of those we live with, and be *censorious* out of civility?

But, perhaps, the fault may not be wholly theirs, with whom we converse. Our *talent*, it may be, lies the same way with their taste: we have a genius, it is possible, turned for *satyr*, above any other species of composition. In that case, it will be no wonder, if we appear to less advantage upon a different topic; and that our *panegyrics*, growing in an *unkindly* soil, are found distasteful, and unfavoury.

But,

But, be that as it may ; we are still by no means innocent. If the fault be in others, we ought not to partake in it ; if in ourselves we may correct it. Should we think it reasonable, were the case our own, to be abused merely for sport, and belied only in order to be *laughed* at ? The jest is lost in the injustice and cruelty : it is a serious matter, at least on the side of the sufferer.

The hearers too are imposed upon, and made the instruments of conveying a falsehood, and doing an injury. The evil spreads fast and is multiplied, and probably increased and aggravated in its course ; and there is no end of the confusion and mischief. *As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows and death : so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, am not I in sport ?*

Prov. xxviii.
18, 19.

Praise, even when it is deserved, may be conferred indiscreetly ; but *censure* is surrounded with peril on every side : the
least

SERM. least impropriety makes it unpardonable.
XXI. You are not allowed to be mistaken, when
— you take upon you to find fault. Time, place, person, occasion, company, and so many circumstances must meet together, that the proper opportunity to discommend, if we will but wait for it, cannot occur often. Censure is in season so very seldom, that it may be compared to that bitter plant, which hardly comes to it's maturity in the life of a man, and is said to flower but once in a hundred years.

The spirit of *Party* is another principal, and almost universal cause, of these offences of the tongue.

Besides the greater contests in Church and State; there are perpetually springing up petty competitions, from interest commonly, sometimes by accident, or almost without occasion, which divide people into little armies; in one or other of which, we are most of us too forward to engage:

engage: we are easily involved in the prejudices of those around us; and being swept away by the torrent of dissension, we increase it.

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XXI.

Hence it is, that most men, and especially the most active and busy, have two characters given them, widely different from each other. The wise and wary give none hastily, and credit neither without abatements. The worth, and the demerit of the greatest number is always moderate: whatever is represented as extraordinary, is probably exaggerated.

Nor are the profligate and the weak alone, drawn aside by these prejudices; discreet and worthy persons, find it difficult to resist them. The appearance of friendship, gratitude, honour, and other good qualities insensibly mislead us: and in pursuit of the image of these glittering virtues, we lose the substance of Truth and Charity.

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Lastly,

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XXI.

Lastly, we are but too apt, all of us, to be influenced in what we speak, by a latent partiality for *ourselves*. How oft are we found to fail in representing the clearest transaction? not from any formed design of doing wrong, or speaking falsely; but through that mist and darkness, which self-interest raises, and the passions spread before the understanding: Imperceptibly almost to ourselves, the bias of partiality, as we pass along in our narration, is working upon every point and circumstance a little; till in the end, we have wandered widely from the line of Truth, or even move in opposition to it.

To relate the fact, to represent our own words and actions, and those of others in which we are interested, *as they are*, is no slight attainment; but demonstrates a superiority of mind, which is the peculiar quality of the highest characters.

How

Against Calumny.

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How great, how truly noble, in whatever station, were that person, whose veracity should be found untainted by selfish considerations ! who might be left to state the cause of his adversary, and trusted with the rights of every party !

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XXI.

Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill ? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart ; He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour ; and hath not slandered his neighbour.

Psalms xv.

S E R M O N XXII.

TENTH COMMANDMENT. PART I.

EXOD. XX. 17.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET.

HAVING before forbidden all actual encroachment upon the property of another, the divine Lawgiver proceeds to impose his restraints upon the mind; and prohibits in the same tone of authority, not only the violent invasion, but the very inward *desire* of that which cannot justly become our own.

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XXII.

He had need be a *Divine* Lawgiver, who takes upon him to impose such precepts; and controul those workings of the soul, which are invisible to mortal eye, and can be tried before no human tribunal.

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XXII.

We find no such injunction as this, I conceive, in the appointments of *Lycurgus* or *Solon*, in the Laws of the *twelve tables*, or the *Institutes* of the *Roman Emperor*. Content with the regulation of the external act, and the imposition of some restraint on the tongue, they presume not to proceed further; but decently and prudently stop, being arrived at the limits of their authority.

Ephes. iv.
6.

But the *Supreme Lord* has no bounds set to his Empire; which both reaches throughout infinity, and penetrates to the inmost recesses: his dominion is *universal*, and *complete*. *He is above all, and through all, and in you all*. The thoughts and intents of the heart, make indeed the principal subject of his inspection and government: to desire, and wish only to be exempt from his authority, is already to have rebelled against Him.

Exhortations others may have used, or given their *counsel*, in the capacity of *wise men*.

men or *Philosophers*, for the benefit of such citizens as would aspire to perfection : but here is a *Law* in all it's forms, set forth with the most solemn, nay, even with a miraculous pomp, in terms the most precise and peremptory, and in company with the other fundamental institutions of the common wealth.

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XXII.

Thou shalt do no murder.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Thou shalt not covet.

To what purpose this last prohibition ?
If I steal, or bear false witness, I know the penalty : *of the best of his own field or vineyard, shall he make restitution ;—Ye shall do unto him as he thought to have done unto his brother.* If I commit murder,

Exod. xxii.

Deut. xix.

19.

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XXII.

der, my life is answerable for the transgression: the punishment is fixed, and the witnesses ready to *lay their hand upon my head.*

But what if I commit no murder, but only desire and wish to do it? Suppose I do not steal with my hands, but covet only in my heart, the possessions of my neighbour: what is the penalty of this transgression? or who shall undertake to be the witness? Is it not superfluous and trifling, to issue out proclamations that must be of no force, and edicts that can never be executed? What is a Law without a sanction? or what are both these, where there can be no proof of the offence? Is not this rather to sport with the majesty of laws; and to debase and expose to ridicule, what is most important and sacred? The dignity and wisdom of the great Lawgiver of the Jews, forbid us to ascribe to him a conduct so plainly inconsistent and unmeaning.

What then can we infer, but that he knew, *his laws had an authority more than human*, that they only passed through his hands; but were indeed enacted by one, who was also able to see them executed?

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XXII,

Him, *who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; and can *bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*: and who, he knew, would do it; would interpose even in this present world, so far as should be necessary for the honour of his government, and the completion of his promises, leaving however, we may well allow, a more full and perfect, a more distinguished and universal display of his attributes, and vindication of his providence, for the final revelation by his Son, and the judgment of the world to come.

Heb. iv.
12.
Ecclus. xii,
14.

It is written—*The law was our School-master to bring us unto Christ*. In this command especially, *Thou shalt not covet*, it breathes the spirit of the Christian dispensation; teaching men to practise its precepts

Gal. iii. 24.

SERM. precepts from an inward principle, and
 XXII. to * *shew the work of the Law, written in
 their hearts.*

* Rom. 2.
 15.

There is somewhere an account, fabulous I allow, but yet instructive, of an Almond Tree, of a particular species, endowed, it seems, with this singular property; whatever mark you shall inscribe upon the kernel of the nut, when it is planted, the same will be found visibly delineated on all the leaves and fruit of the tree that springs from it. The stone being opened at first, and the intended character once carefully drawn, the rest follows of course, without further application. As the tree shoots up and spreads, that original impression is displayed on every side, and multiplied in a thousand branches.

How many rules and maxims of life might be spared, could we fix a principle of virtue within; break the *stony heart*, as the Scripture calls it, and inscribe this
 living

Ezek. xi.
 19.
 xxxvi. 26.

living sentiment of the love of God in the affection; that tender but powerful part of our frame, from which our whole life, and all our actions are derived, as the tree, branches, leaves, and fruit, spring out of the kernel of the almond?

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XXII.

Were the Spirit of Piety within, and God's name written in our breast, how little teaching would then suffice, to shew us what is pleasing to him? His love, once in the heart, would pass with ease into our whole behaviour; and leave upon all our words and actions, engraved, and shining, as on the Mitre of Aaron, *Holiness unto the Lord.*

Exod.
xxviii. 36.

If Honesty and Justice be once seated in the affection, the decisions of Casuists will be no longer wanted: he who loves righteousness, is master of all the distinctions in morality.

The law is for the ungodly. The other commandments, with the train of penalties

1 Tim. i. 9.

SERM. ties annexed to them, are made only for
 XXII. those persons, who are not good enough
 ————— to be governed by this precept.

Exod. xxi. *He that curseth his Father or his Mother,*
 17. *shall surely be put to death.*

Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man*
shall his blood be shed.

Levit. xx. *The adulterer and the adulteress shall*
surely be put to death.

Exod. xxi. *He that stealeth a man shall surely be*
 16. *put to death.*

Exod. xxii. *If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, he*
 1, 3. *shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four*
sheep for a sheep. If he have nothing, then
he shall be sold for his theft.

Deut. xix. *If a false witness rise up against any man,*
 16, 19, 21. *to testify against him that which is wrong ;*
—then shall ye do unto him, as he had
thought to have done unto his brother.—
And

The Evangelical Commandment.

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And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

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XXII.

The law, you see, is encompassed with terrour; like that mountain, from which it was delivered. *Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up, or touch the border of it. There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through. And there were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp, trembled.*

Exod. xix.
12, &c.

But what is all this terrour, and these dangers to that man, who is not prompted to transgress? To him, who has brought his heart into subjection to this sublime precept, *Thou shalt not covet*, the threatenings annexed to the commandment are a *dead-letter*; the yoke of bondage is broken. Duty and desire concurring, he has the pleasing task of fulfilling his Maker's will, by all those offices which are
the

SERM.
XXII.

Heb. xii.

23.

Matt xviii.

23.

Pfal. xvi.

12.

Rom. viii.

21.

the most agreeable to himself. Such labour is delight; such service perfect freedom. He is passed from under the law, into an *evangelical*, or rather indeed a *heavenly* state; resembling *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and the *angels which do always behold the face of the Father which is in heaven*; and receiving some foretaste even now, of the *fulness of joy that is in God's presence, the pleasure which is at his right hand for evermore.*

O happy, envied state of those good men, who are *delivered from the bondage of corruption into this glorious liberty of the children of God!* Slaves no longer to the tyranny of sin; nor condemned to wage an everlasting war, with turbulent passions, depraved appetites, and inveterate habits of vice; Avarice, mean and miserable; Ambition, never to be satisfied; Pride, puffed up with wind; Vanity, decked with feathers; Envy, Wrath, Intemperance, and every inordinate affection, the offspring of Selfishness and Folly,
the

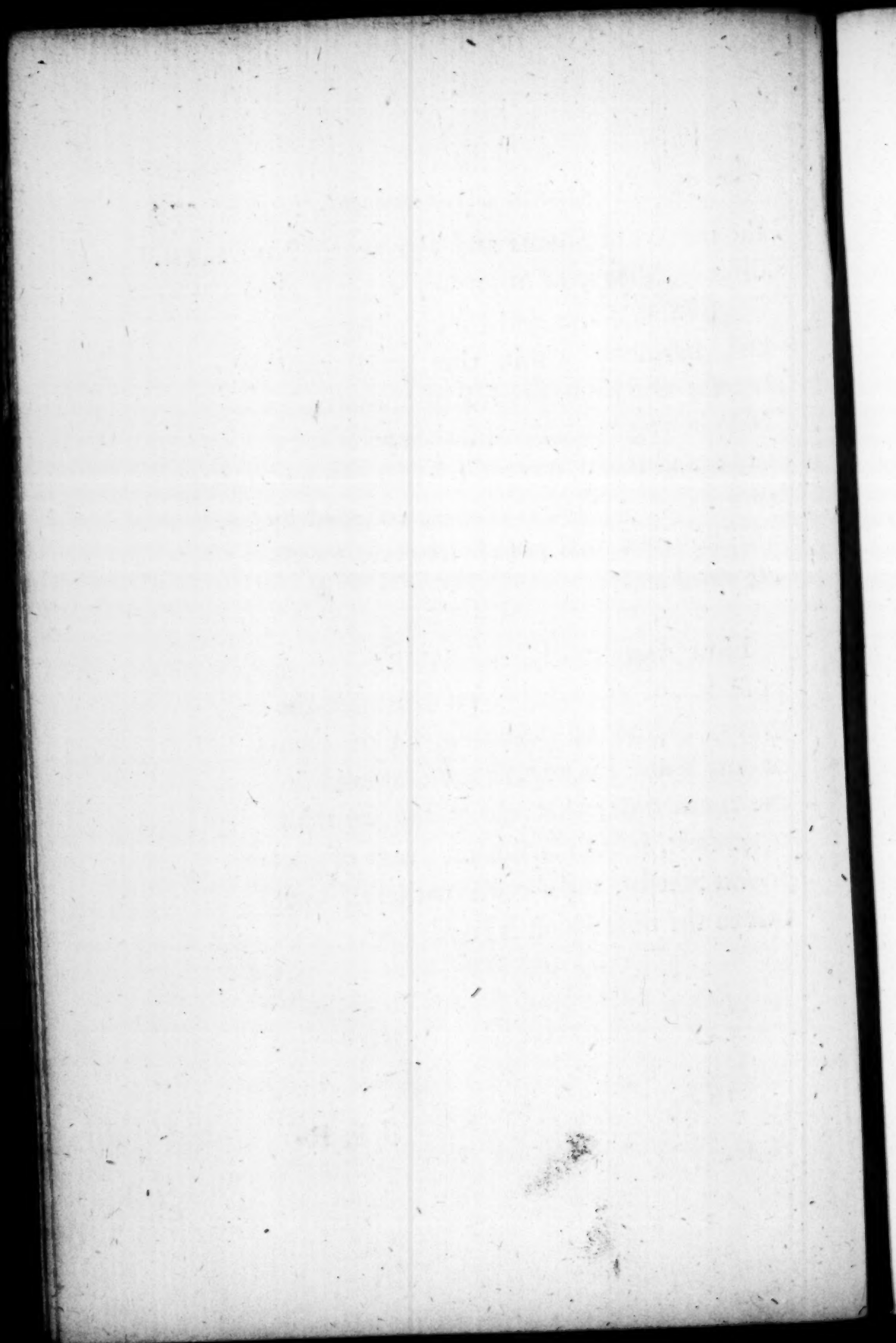
the parents of Shame and Torment. No dispute, delay, or murmur, against the voice of Wisdom and Piety. Peace all, and harmony within the good man's breast; and his hopes full of immortality. Men he regards, all, with the eye of Charity; and looks up to God with the sentiments of a Son, reverence softened by affection, and that *perfect love which casteth out Fear.*

SERM.

XXII.

1 John iv.
18.

How *near* to this perfect state, it is possible for us to arrive on this side the grave, instead of disputing, let us, each of us, learn by experience: assured in the mean time, that every step we take towards it, is both an advancement of our *present* felicity, and a confirmation of our title to the bliss which is *everlasting*.



S E R M O N XXIII.

TENTH COMMANDMENT. PART II.

COLOS. iii. 2.

SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH.

HE who would raise a lofty fabrick, must dig low for the surest ground to place it on: and whoever aspires after the greatest heights of true glory and happiness, must lay the foundation in *humility*.

SERM.
XXIII.

We recommend to you only that contentment, which is indeed the noblest ambition; no other disinterestedness, than what is most for your advantage.

A greedy and restless temper of mind, discontented with it's present lot, and

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T

eagerly

SERM.

XXIII.

eagerly aspiring after a higher station; in the *first* place, is *miserable*, inconsistent with all comfort and happiness. It is in itself, let your external advantages be what they will, a perpetual cause of disquietude and torment: it is a *longing*, that can never be satisfied. Success only adds fuel to the flame, and gives it strength to stretch out to a wider compass.

Secondly, it is an *irreligious* temper of mind: and this *two* ways; both as it takes too much possession of the heart, to leave room for sentiments of piety, engrossing our whole concern, and employing all our endeavours; and also more directly, as it implies a dissatisfaction with the appointments of God, and a murmuring at his providence; as if he had been less kind to us than he ought to have been, and partial in favour of others. It is mutiny against our heavenly commander: we refuse the station he assigns, and disdain the service on which he orders us.

And

And *thirdly*, it is a temper very contrary to *justice* and fidelity towards men. He will not always withhold his *hands*, whose *heart* is continually set upon another's property. There will be some unhappily favourable moment, when, opportunity conspiring with inclination, the injustice long premeditated, will be at length accomplished; and then, as the prophet speaketh, *they who conceive mischief, bring forth iniquity.*

SERM.

XXIII.

Isa. lix. 4.

This is to be understood of the greater violations of justice, attended with danger; for in less instances, and those that are safe, there will be no such circumspection and delay. The unfairness of the heart within, will be shewing itself incessantly; and, like the stain of glass, through which a ray of the sun passes, will infect all objects, and give it's colour to every transaction of life.

Or even if it should be hindered, by means of some external impediment, from

T 2

appearing;

SERM.
XXIII.

1 Cor. iv.
5.

appearing; the very inward *disposition*, the desire and design of doing wrong, is justly to be punished by that judge, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.*

It is the consideration of this future judgment, and the eternal, unchangeable state of happiness or misery consequent to it, which is the sovereign antidote for the malady of discontent. Let but your hopes be full of immortality, your thoughts and hearts inflamed with the joys of heaven; and the possessions and pleasures of this world, will be seen to be little worth the contest: their lustre will die away, like the glimmering of the stars when the sun ariseth.

Days and years, poverty and riches, when set against eternity, and compared with heavenly bliss, lose, in the infinite disproportion, all their own petty inequalities, and are equally nothing; no objects

Contentment and the Love of God.

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to excite animosities among immortal spirits, redeemed from eternal misery, and heirs of everlasting glory.

SERM.

XXIII.

Envy and insolence, discontent and pride, avarice and ambition cease with the interests of this earth; by which they are sustained and nourished, as the lamp is fed with oil: When the soul is touched from above, every thing of terrestrial materials is destroyed.

The great doctrines, the awful truths, the glorious promises, the tremendous threatenings of our holy religion, catch the heart, and carry it as a sacrifice to heaven; but, like the fire of the Lord that fell on the altar of Elijah, *consume the wood, and the stones, and the dust.*

1 Kings
xviii. 38.

The *example* and *death* of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to Christians an argument above all others, enforcing indeed every virtue; but with peculiar advantage, this

T 3

contempt

SERM. contempt of earthly greatness, and the
XXIII. love of God and man.

Luke xxiii.
34.

It is the thing least observable in his example, that he prayed for his murderers: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*: he left the bosom and bliss of his Father, and the glory which he had with him before the world was, *on purpose* to suffer thus; for this very end, that he might endure abuse, and insults, stripes, and death; a death ignominious, exquisitely painful and lingering.

He suffered this from the hands of *men*; for whose whole race it was, that he had abased himself so low, and endured so much. He came down from heaven, and would be made man, for the sake of men, who already owed their Being to him; yet had broken his laws, were regardless of his authority, insensible of his affection, and prepared to crucify him.

They

They indeed were enemies; but his love continued. * *Whom he once loved, he loved to the end.* He created them to be good and happy; and died for them, when they were become wretched sinners.

SERM.

XXIII.

* John xiii.
1.

The riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering! Who is able to comprehend this breadth, and length, and depth, and height!

Rom. ii. 4,
Ephes. iii.
18.

Words cannot represent, no tongue of Men or Angels is able to express it: Let this love be shed abroad in your hearts; then shall you understand, what we cannot utter; and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

Rom. v. 3.

Ephes. ii.
19.

Then will the commandments of God be no longer grievous to us: the hardest duties will become easy; and the forgiveness of injuries, be like the plainest parts of justice.

All mankind will then be dear to us, for his sake who made, and who redeemed

SERM. them. How shall we be able to hate any
XXIII. one, thus favoured by him who loved us,
— and died for us ?

All our little animosities will be burnt up in that holy flame of Divine Love : and we shall be as incapable of conceiving hatred, as of committing murder.

This is the great secret, to remove all difficulties out of the road of duty ; and make the service of God, perfect freedom. *Thy testimonies are my delight*, says the Psalmist ; *The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me, than thousands of gold and silver* : And our Lord, *my meat is to do the will of him that sent me*. When the Apostles had been imprisoned, and beaten, *they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ*.

Psal. cxix.
24, 72.
John iv. 34.
Acts v. 41.

This is the nature of Love ; The greater the sacrifice that it makes, the higher the satisfaction it enjoys. It is
4 even

even uneasy, and discontented, as it were, if it's assistance be not wanted; if no occasion can be found, by which it may give full proof of its activity and ardour.

SERM.
XXIII.

When we are touched with this sentiment, we shall no longer complain of hardships in religion; nor want to know, how near we may approach with safety toward the violation of a commandment. But how much soever we do, we shall never think we have done, or can do enough; but shall be always pressing forward, and aspiring to more, and still higher expressions of affection and gratitude.

Obstructions will but increase our ardour: as a strong flame is made more fierce, by the same wind which extinguisheth a small one.

*Love is strong as death. Many waters
cannot quench love; neither can the floods
drown*

Cant. viii.
6, 7.

SERM. *drown it. If a man would give all the*
 XXIII. *substance of his house for love, it would*

utterly be contemned.

1 John iv.
 19.

Riches cannot purchase love ; but love inspires it. The highest instance of affection is the love of enemies, That of Jesus Christ to men. Reflect upon this love ; set it before your eyes ; desire at least to be sensible of it, and to feel kindling in your own heart, a return for that infinite affection ; *We love him, because he first loved us.*

1 John ii.

5.

2 Cor. v.

17.

1 John iv.

7.

Cherish this spark, by sobriety and virtue, by meditation and prayer, and self-denial ; and especially by acts of charity, and compassion, and forgiveness to mankind, to the least, and lowest, and worst : till *the love of God be perfected in you, and that birth finished, by which you will become a new creature ; as the Scripture saith, Every one that loveth is born of God.*

Then

Contentment and the Love of God.

287

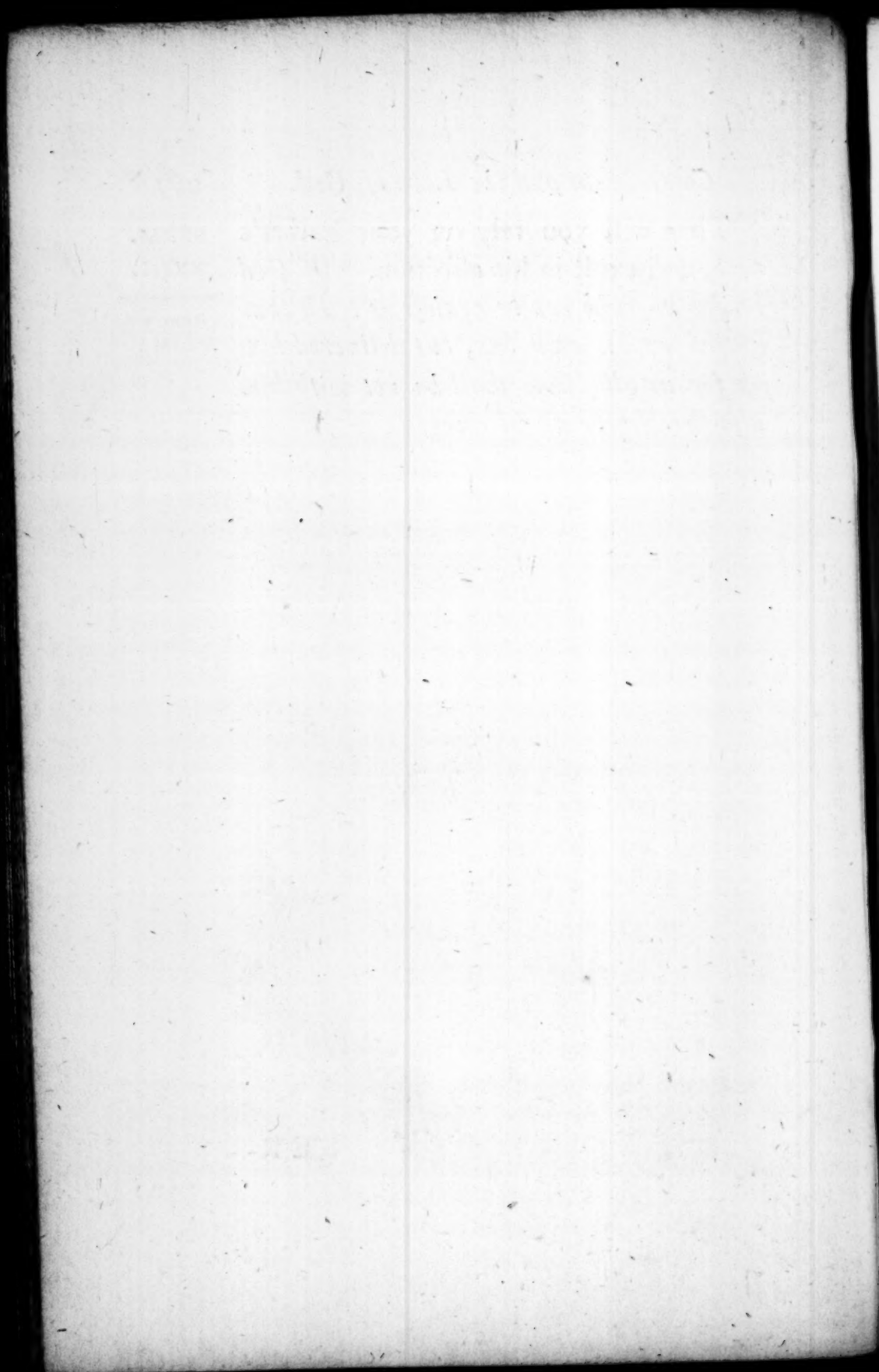
Then will you rely on your Father's care, and exult in his affection. * *If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

SERM.

XXIII,

*Rom. viii,
31, 32.

SER-



S E R M O N S

ON THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

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S E R M O N I.

MATTH. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

AND AS THEY WERE EATING, JESUS TOOK BREAD, AND BLESSED IT, AND BRAKE IT; AND GAVE IT TO THE DISCIPLES, AND SAID, TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY. AND HE TOOK THE CUP, AND GAVE THANKS, AND GAVE IT TO THEM, SAYING, DRINK YE ALL OF IT. FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

THE foundation of the holy Rite here instituted is this, which is indeed the great doctrine of the Christian religion, *That our Saviour Christ, both God and Man, did humble himself even to the death upon the cross for us miserable sinners.*

SERM.
I.

Communion Service.

He

SERM.

I.

* John xvii.

† John i. 1,

3.

He was * *in glory with the Father before the world was.* † *He was in the beginning with God, and was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Such was his state of divine happiness and glory.

On the other hand, man was fallen from that degree of earthly comforts and enjoyments, in which this Divine Word had placed him, into a state of labour, sorrow, diseases, and death, by the sin of our first parents; and was also liable to the sentence of eternal condemnation, to be pronounced by the just judgment of Almighty God upon every wilful transgressor. *He was in the possession of unutterable glory and felicity; we were overwhelmed in misery, and devoted to destruction.*

But behold the love of God! He lays aside his divine perfections, and clothes himself with our infirmities. He hastens to our deliverance; takes upon him our flesh;

flesh; he lives in the form and fashion of a man amongst us; in a station of labour and indigence; doing good continually, suffering reproach and wrong; and at last is put to death unjustly, scornfully, and cruelly; by his own creatures, for whose sake also he had thus abased himself. All this he willingly undergoes, to do the will of his Father; to fulfil the Scriptures that thus it must be; to teach us the way that leadeth to eternal bliss; to give us an example of goodness and patience; and to make atonement by his sufferings for our sins.

In the same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Communion Service.

Imagine you see our Divine Redeemer sitting with his disciples at his last supper,

VOL. II.

U

and

SERM. and hear him addressing himself to them
 I. in the following manner.

The solemn ceremonies which I and you are now observing, are memorials; you know, of a great event which happened many ages ago to your forefathers; this lamb before us is the representation of that which was slain and eaten by them in Egypt. Come, I will institute a new rite, to be kept in remembrance of what shall immediately befall myself, on your account. Before the evening and the morning shall conclude the present day, this body of mine shall be delivered into the hands of men; and they shall wound, and pierce, and kill it. I take this bread into my hands, and break it to pieces; take, eat; it is my body which is given for you. By this token you shall keep in memory and represent to all ages unto the end of the world, this *precious sacrifice, fore-ordained before the foundation* of it, and now going to be offered for your sake.

1 Pet. i. 19,
 20.

My

My Father, who is in heaven, loves me, his own, and only begotten Son, with a tender and unparalleled affection.

SERM.

I.

He loved me before the foundation of the world. And though I indeed was, and am willing to suffer, yet would he not have sent me down into this state of humiliation, to undergo the sufferings and death which are even now preparing for me, if he had not also loved you, and had compassion on you, though enemies to him by evil works, and dead in trespasses and sins. For God indeed is Love. It is the chief part of his very nature, which it is possible for you to comprehend, and to imitate. Love him therefore, who is Love, with all your heart and mind and strength. This is the first and great commandment. Of his own tender pity towards a lost world, he sent me to do, and suffer all that you have seen, and shall soon see, for the benefit of men. And when I am removed from you, and you see me no more, he shall give you another comforter, even the Spirit of Truth,

John xvii.

24.

SERM. to supply the want of my presence, and
 I. conduct that great work of the salvation
 of mankind, for which the Father sent me, and for which I am come willingly into the world.

And as the bread which I broke represented my crucified body; so this cup which I command you all to drink of, let it signify my blood, which is now going to be poured out for all men.

Lev. xvii.

II.

Heb. ix. 2.

Heb. x. 4.

It is written that *it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul: by the law almost all things are purged with blood: and without the shedding of blood is no remission.* But it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away the sins of men. That was required, and was available only, as a type of my blood, now to be shed, once for all. Take this cup, to be partakers of this atonement.

You remember also, when Moses had
 read

read to the people the book of the covenant between God and them, and the people consented to the covenant, and said, *All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient*; Moses took half of the blood of the sacrifices, and sprinkled it on the altar, and the other half he sprinkled on the people, and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you*. The blood was sprinkled on both the contracting parties; the one half on the altar, representing him who was there worshipped, and the other half on the people of the Jews.

SERM.

I.

Exod. xxiv.
7, 8.

That covenant is now expiring in my death, and a new one is to be made with all the nations of the earth. I am the victim offered at this great solemnity, on the altar of the cross. When you take this cup, you ratify this new covenant on your part, and give your consent to the conditions of it.

You will be no longer bound by the

U 3

ceremonial

SERM. ceremonial law. It expires of course
 I. with me, who am it's end and consum-
 mation.

Matth.
 xxiv. 2.

But my own power and providence shall abolish it more effectually, and execute what I now predict. Some even of yourselves, to whom I am speaking, shall live to see the time, when of this noble Temple, the work of so many years, the wonder of so many ages, *there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.*

As you are to be thankful for this de-
 Acts xv. 10. liverance from *a yoke which neither your Fathers nor you were able to bear*; so take care not to turn your liberty into licentiousness. The sense of your freedom from this bondage should restrain you from violating those laws which are of everlasting obligation. As you will not henceforth be occupied in sacrifices, and other burdensome ceremonies; apply your-

yourselfes fo much the more to what is better.

SERM.

I.

Look upon the whole race of mankind, as your neighbours and brethren. Embrace them with a cordial, and unrestrained affection. They were always the workmanship of the same Creator, and bore his divine image; they are now to be redeemed by the same blood.

Do good to as many as possible. Imitate in this your Father which is in heaven. But as you can follow him in doing good but a little way; come nearer to his example in your good wishes and kind intentions. Let there be no limits to the exercise of this part of your charity. Since you can never repay him any thing for his infinite patience, and mercy, and love to you; love men for his sake. He, the origin of all good, is exalted above all recompense; but you can reach those who belong to his household: let not the

SERM. highest among you disdain to be a * *ser-*
vant to wash the feet of the servants of
your Lord.

• 1 Sam.
 xxv. 41.

But if even in these little expressions of your condescension and charity, your abilities are still too weak to keep pace with your inclination; can you relent, can you pardon for the love of God? If you cannot bestow because you are poor, or labour, because you are weak; can you forgive as you yourselves are forgiven?

Matth.
 xxvi. 29.

Yet once more, before I finally deliver this cup into your hands, never again myself to partake of the like refreshment upon earth; since what I now say to you are almost the last words that I shall utter, the declaration of my mind at such a time, my orders, injunctions now, ought to have a peculiar weight; they are my dying will and testament. *This cup is the new testament sealed in my blood; take it,*

Luke xxiii.
 30.

it, to shew that you lay claim to the benefit of my bequests, and appertain to the household and family of the testator.

SERM.

I.

You must continue this rite among yourselves hereafter, when I am gone from you, and deliver it down to be observed to the end of the world. It is so small a request, that I cannot think any of those who become my disciples will refuse to comply with it,

If I had required you to come together from all parts to the very place of my death, and there shew your remembrance of me by painful fastings, or costly sacrifices; I had but copied after the example of former institutions. The whole nation almost of the Jews is even now, you see, assembled here at Jerusalem to keep the Passover. And this is but one of the three festivals to be kept all at this place. The easier I make my commands to you, the more punctual you will be in the observance of them.

SERM.

I.

* John xiv.
27.

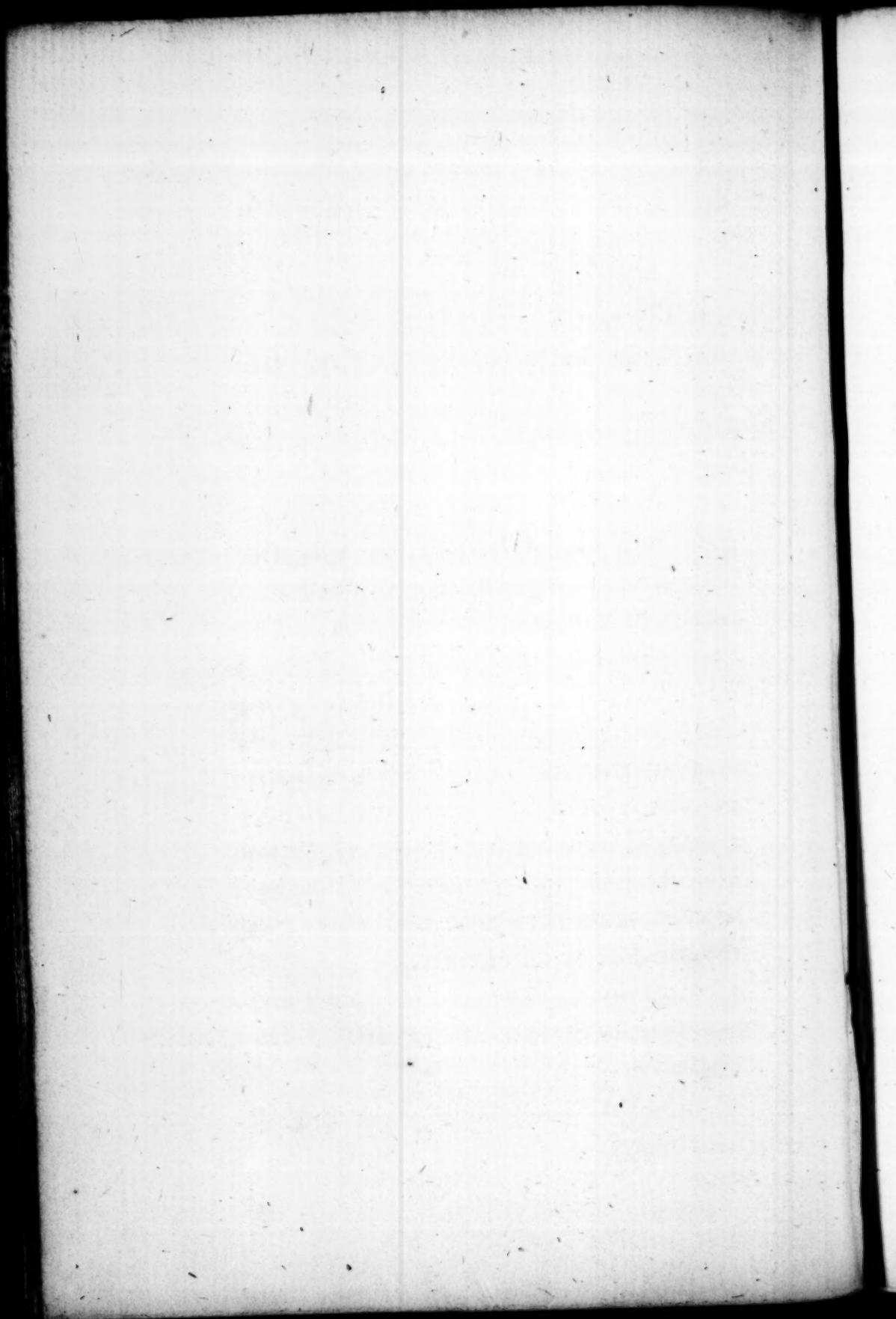
* *To you I give my peace. Not as the world giveth*, in compliment only, and without either meaning or consequence: I speak with authority. I am still that Word by which the worlds were made. My peace is the pardon of your sins, courage and consolation under all troubles, and everlasting salvation.

Farewel: I cannot talk more with you. All things are now ready. I am expected by him that betrayeth me: and I go to meet him, and to deliver myself into his hands. The *Testament* which I have declared, the new *Covenant* which I establish, the *Atonement* which I have undertaken, are now to be completed and ratified, according to the appointment of Almighty God, by me in my own blood. Father, I come; to do thy will; to fulfil thy word; to bear thy wrath; to be the sacrifice for the world; a willing sacrifice for a world of sinners.

Not that I am insensible of what is
3 approach-

approaching: I see it in all it's terrors. SERM.
And if the bitter cup might pass from I.
me! Alas! for this very cause came I
into the world. Heavenly Father, let
thy will be done. Hitherto I have in all
things done thy will. I prepare now to
suffer in obedience to it. And, oh! if
any thing that I have ever done, if all
that I now suffer, avail in thy sight; if
thou hast ever loved me, or will grant
any thing at my request; Father, have
mercy on the poor race of men. Pity
their blindness; pardon their folly; lay
all their iniquities upon my head.

Thus redeemed, they shall give thanks
unto thee for endless ages; they shall be
translated from earth to heaven; and join
with those holy angels which never sinned,
in celebrating thy praises and performing
thy pleasure to all eternity.



S E R M O N II.

R E V. xiii. 8.

THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

IF the New Testament be true, the Old is so too; because the New Testament tells us that it is. The Gospel refers continually to the Law and the Prophets, not only as being true, but indeed as containing a capital proof of it's own divine authority. *Search the Scriptures,* John v. 39. says our Lord to the Jews, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* We cannot therefore admit the one revelation, and deny the other. They are closely united by Him who is the author of both: and *what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* Matt. xix. 6.

SERM.
II.

Known

SERM.

II.

* Acts xv.
18.Matt. xxvi.
26.

Heb. x. 1.

Rev. xiii.
8.

**Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.* As the various events which befel our heavenly Redeemer during his abode on earth, are said to have come to pass *that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*; so on the other hand, those Scriptures were therefore written, and the things recorded there were done, because the Supreme Wisdom had fore-ordained the events that should correspond to them. The services under the Mosaic law, and before it, were but *a shadow of good things to come.* The Redeemer's death was the whole meaning of every sacrifice, in all ages: and when at last, *in the fulness of time*, he was offered upon the cross, he was *the Lamb slain from the FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

If we would understand any thing concerning the sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, we must read, no doubt, those places in the *Gospels* where the institution is recorded, and consider them with

a very

a very particular attention. And if there be any other passages of the *New Testament* which relate to this subject, it is very true that we must attend to them also.

SERM.

II.

But why are we prohibited with so much caution from looking any further for information? It is because *other writers who followed have no pretences to the same regard from us: the New Testament is alone to be depended on: and we ought to take all our notions of this duty from it.*

Plain Account.

Not to stand now to dispute about the other writers *who followed*; what, may we ask, if we should have recourse to the writers who *went before*?

What before the institution and existence of the right you are enquiring after?

Why

SERM.

II.

Why not? The Old Testament was given by divine inspiration as well as the New, and contains the religion of that people among whom our Lord was born, and lived, and taught; and must therefore, in all human appearance, help us greatly to comprehend the instructions which he delivered.

But this religion of the Jews was also, in it's nature, *preparatory* to that which he substituted in the place of it, and is intimately connected with it. Christ is declared to be *the end of the Law*; and he came, as he tells us of himself, *to fulfil it. Ye are no more strangers and foreigners.* says St. Paul to the Gentiles at Ephesus, *but fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

Rom. x. 4.

Matt. v.

37.

Ephes. ii.

29, 20.

These reasons are general, and extend to other doctrines and duties of Christianity.

anity. But the institution of the *Lord's Supper* was attended with such particular circumstances as must lead us inevitably to the books of the Old Testament for our information, and suggest to us that, very possibly, even the essence of this duty cannot be understood without them.

SERM.

II.

As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it.—As they were eating.—Was this a common meal : or was it not rather the celebration of a sacred rite ? Will you not permit us to inquire concerning the time, place, and occasion of this solemnity ? Must we start at once from the very words of consecration ? As if never any thing had been done or written, from the beginning of the world to the then present moment, which could relate to that transaction : as if this new *institution* could have no connection with any other duties or institutions : and the whole Jewish dispensation was not accomplished but destroyed ; and the Law and the

Matt. xxvi.
26.

SERM. Prophets, and all the books of the old
 II. revelation, had been utterly anihilated,
 and should be henceforth never heard
 of.

Nay, if we will permit ourselves to hear all that our Lord was pleased to say even while he was sitting at that very last supper, where he instituted this holy rite; we must either be already instructed in the religion of the Jews, as the persons all were to whom he spoke, or we cannot help asking some questions, which can only be answered out of the Law of Moses.

Luke xxii.
 14, 15.

He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.

If our Lord, in his heavenly wisdom, so passionately longed for this Passover, that he desired only to live till he had kept it;

it; will you not let us ask what this Passover was, which he judged of such importance? Perhaps it had some relation to his death; perhaps to the holy rite he was going to appoint; possibly, all the three are essentially connected.

The Jewish Passover was one of the most considerable of the Sacrifices required in the Old Testament: and St. Paul calls our Lord himself by this very name; *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* 1 Cor. v. 7.

The great deliverance of the Jewish nation had been effected by means of the first Passover. *Ye shall kill the Passover, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood; and the Lord will pass through and smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood, the Lord will pass over the door, and not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.* Exod. xii. 22, 23.

SERM.

II.

 Matt. xxvi.
 26, 27, 28.

This event our Lord and his Apostles were now solemnly commemorating. When therefore *as they were eating* the sacrifice of the Passover, *Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body; and the cup, saying, This is my blood;* he refers to the occasion present, and the objects before them: which are not industriously to be removed out of sight, but all taken into the account, if we desire to comprehend the fulness of his meaning.

It is as if he had said, You are eating the flesh of this lamb: the blood of it has been shed at the altar to make atonement. But you must now know that these things are but shadows. I am the great sacrifice, and my blood the true atonement. Here, eat this bread, drink of this cup, considering them as representing my body and blood; and you shall be partakers of what was always the end and meaning

meaning of the legal Passover; of this Body which is just now going to be offered in sacrifice to God for the sins of all men, of this Blood, *without the shedding of which there is no remission.*

SERM.

II.

Heb. ix. 22.

Can we avoid observing here the remarkable disparity between the services required in the Law, and the rites appointed in the Gospel? How laborious the former, and still obscure! how short, yet clear; how easy, yet how significant the latter! Our Lord makes his commands as light as possible to us; and takes the heavy and painful part of his religion upon himself. Instead of the mysterious and bloody rite of circumcision, he has appointed the plain and expressive ceremony of washing his converts in pure water. In the place of all the costly sacrifices of the Law, he has offered indeed his own body upon the cross; but he requires only of us to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him.

X 3

We

SERM.

II.

John iv.
23.

We can now serve God, and be accepted by him, without bringing with us any other offering, besides that of a devout and upright heart. *The hour now is, when the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

If he required such a multiplicity of ceremonies, and expensive offerings and services from the Jews, it was for wise reasons, no doubt, but not because he himself delighted in them. God did ever esteem innocence before the most costly sacrifices. Even when he demanded those external performances, he would not accept them without a good life.

Isa. i. 11,
18.

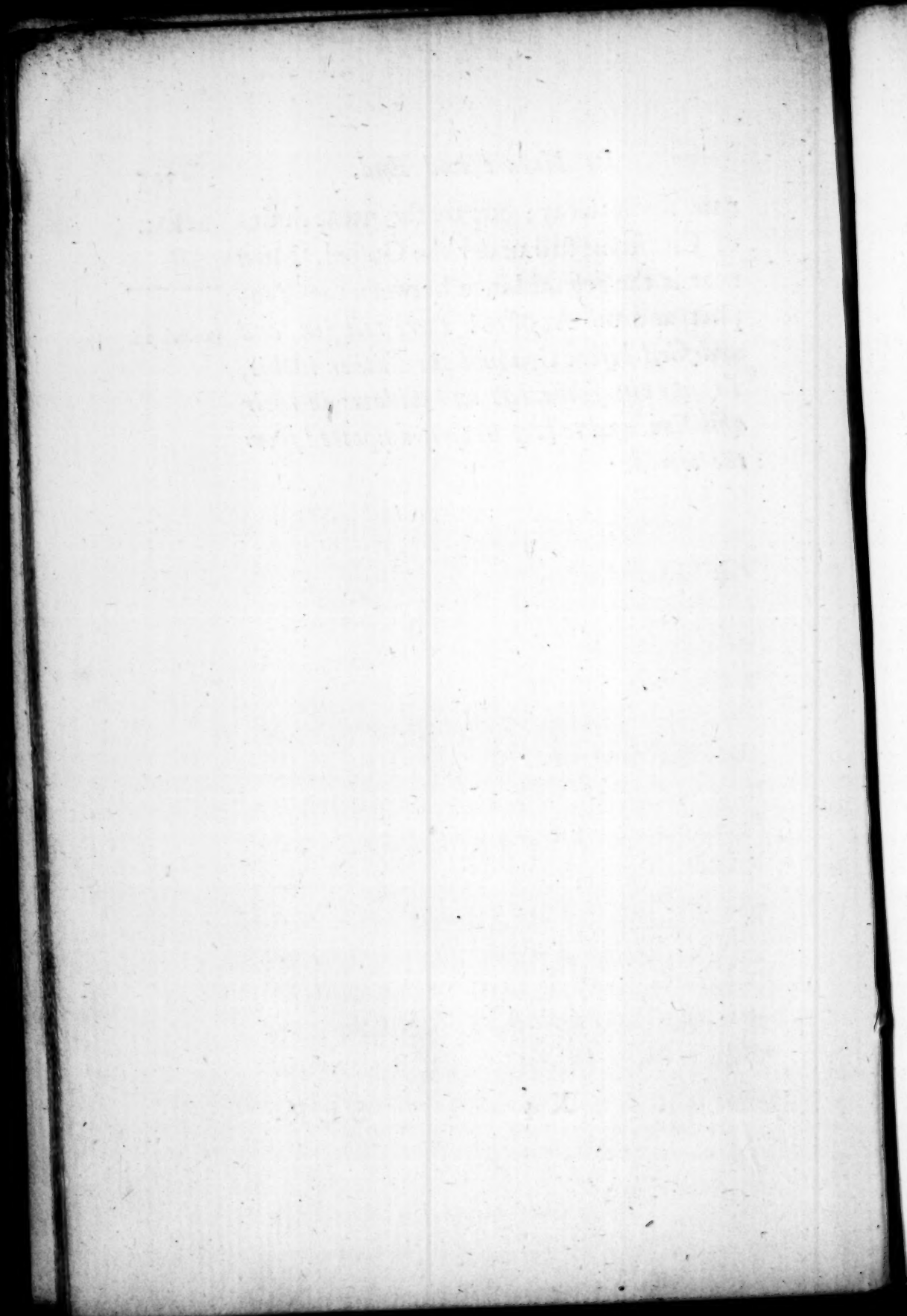
To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. Wash ye, make you clean. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. These parts of the old cove-
nant

nant never decay ; but are the great duties
of Christians still under the Gospel. How
near is the resemblance between the Pro-
phet and the Apostle ! *Pure religion and*
undefiled before God and the Father is this,
To visit the fatherless and widows in their
affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from
the world.

SERM.

II.

James i. 27.



S E R M O N I I I .

I C O R. xi. 26.

FOR AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD,
AND DRINK THIS CUP, YE DO SHEW
THE LORD'S DEATH, TILL HE COME.

THE Law and the Gospel are so ordered by the Divine Providence, as to reflect light upon one another; and are neither of them seen to advantage separately. If you look at the Law without a reference to Christ, you see a multitude of means only without the end; a shadow without substance; a letter without the meaning and spirit. Your eyes are blinded by a veil hanging before them, as St. Paul tells us, the minds of the Jews were, and as they continue to be; *for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament.*

SERM.
III.

2 Cor. iii.
14.

On

SERM.

III.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

On the other hand, neither can we well understand the accomplishment of all these things in the Gospel, without some knowledge of the antecedent dispensation. It adds beauty to both to see the correspondence that is between them; the gradual progress out of darkness into *the marvellous light*; the distant designs that have been answered, the mysteries unfolded, the prophecies fulfilled, and earthly types and symbols advanced into heavenly realities.

Gal. iii. 25.

St. Paul indeed, having called the Law a Schoolmaster, doth say, that *after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*. It is true, we are not under it; not obliged to live by it's rules, and at this time to practise it's rites and ceremonies. But as the Apostle had acknowledged that it was our schoolmaster *to bring us to Christ*; we may be content to receive this benefit from it, and become the better proficient in Christianity for

A Remembrance of the Death of Christ.

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for having first imbibed the rudiments of the Law,

SERM.

III.

It is through the instruction of that Schoolmaster, the Law, that we learn to comprehend in some measure, (for it is still a mystery even to Angels,) the great doctrine revealed in the Gospel, *of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow: that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and this reconciliation is by his death: that he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; an offering and a sacrifice to God; set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.*

1 Pet. i. 11,

2 Cor. v. 19,

Rom. v. 10,

John i. 29,

Ephes. v. 2,

Rom. iii.

25.

You are made to see here almost of yourselves, the necessity of the death of Christ. He could be no sacrifice, according to the pattern of those under the Law without it. *It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* This we learn of Moses; and no longer wonder that the prayer even of the only begotten should

Levit. xvii.
11.

SERM.

III.

* John xii.
27.

should return into his own bosom. * *Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.* He was born into the world for this end, to suffer, and to be put to death: he took up his life in order thus to lay it down; and was made a living man, for this very purpose, to be crucified and slain.

Did I say the prayer of the Redeemer returned unanswered? He himself retracts it. He could have called down legions of Angels to his own deliverance, and the destruction of his murderers.

Matth.
xxvi. 54.

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

1 Cor. xv.
14.

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. And if he had not suffered on the cross, the predictions of the ancient Scriptures, beginning, as it is written, *at Moses and all the prophets*, the types in the Levitical service, the great Passover itself, and every sacrifice under the Law, had been

Luke xxiv.
27.

insignificant

A Remembrance of the Death of Christ.

321

insignificant and vain: no atonement had been made for the sins of man; and the judgment had both come, and for ever rested upon all men to condemnation.

SERM.

III.

Rom. v.
18.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls, and of goats should take away sins: they received their whole virtue and efficacy from that one sacrifice offered for sins for ever, by him who loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

Heb. x. 4,
12.

Ephes. v. 2.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; and our redemption is through his blood. By this we have justification, sanctification, peace. The Scripture mentions every one of these, expressly ascribing them to the same cause. It is he that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his blood. And being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him; or, as it might be rendered, through it. But there is no difference: as it is he who hath purchased the Church; so the price

1 Cor. v. 7.

Ephes. i. 7.

Rom. v. 9.

Heb. xiii.

12.

Col. i. 20.

Rev. i. 5.

Rom. v. 9.

δι' αὐτοῦ.

Acts xx. 28.

he

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III.

he has paid for it is *his own blood*. The New Testament, you see, teaches this doctrine in places innumerable; and the whole tenor of the Old, not only implies it, but has hardly any other meaning.

When therefore, in conformity to our Lord's institution at his last supper, we eat bread and drink wine, as he hath commanded, in remembrance of him; it is in remembrance of his death. It is his death, his crucifixion, his wounded body and his blood, that are the awful objects then set before us.

God forbid that any Christian should undervalue the *teaching* of our Lord. His commands are necessary to be obeyed: and it will be found at last, that it is in vain to call him our *Lord*, if we do not *the things which he saith*. His incarnation, his birth, life, miracles, and resurrection, are all of them proper objects for our frequent and devout meditations; and can never surely be thought of, without

Luke vi.
46.

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out the warmest feelings, and the best resolutions.

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But yet, when we come to partake of the Lord's supper, according to his appointment; it is not any of these, that is the direct and immediate object of our attention at that time; but his sufferings and death. He is set before us, in this sacrament, as *crucified* and *dying for us*. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

1 Cor. xi.
26.

This precise consideration, I should make no scruple to say, is essential to the right discharge of the duty, and to every *true account* of it. If you take upon you at any time to enumerate the particulars that must concur in order to the performing of this duty, agreeably to the end of the institution, the remembrance of the *death* of Christ is always to be *one*, it is to be the *chief* of them.

It

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III.

* Plain Account.

It is not a right account, for it is not a perfect one, to say, that * *the communicant in a serious sense of his relation to Christ, as his disciple, is to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him as a person corporally absent*: absent he might be, had he never died: we are to do it in remembrance of him, as one who *suffered* in our stead, and was crucified for us. To leave this out, is to let drop what is indispensably necessary, and turn aside our attention from the very point on which it should be fixed above all others.

1 Cor. xi.
26.Luke xxii.
19.

To see this, indeed, it is not necessary to go farther than the New Testament, *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's DEATH till he come*; than the four Gospels; nay, if you will bind us to them, than the very words of the institution, *This is my body, which is given for you*. Given! how? to be put to death, no doubt; crucified for your sake. St. Paul's words are,
which

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* *which is broken for you*: delivered up to suffer violence on your account. And, † *this cup is the new Testament of my blood, which is shed for you.* Or as the words are in another Evangelist, ‡ *this is my blood of the new Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*

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III.

* 1 Cor. xi.

24.

† Luke

xxii. 20.

‡ Matt.

xxvi. 28.

Look up therefore, Christians, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, to *the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*: look to him as dying for the remission of your sins; washing them away in his precious blood; suffering that you may be saved. And while you are kneeling under his cross, touched with the utmost possible sense of God's love who gave his only begotten Son, and affected with sentiments of the most tender devotion to him who gave himself for you, embrace also with your good will all mankind, whom he loved, for his sake. Then rise up to the sober continual practice of every thing, that is good, and excellent, and praise-worthy, and

Heb. x. 10.

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con-

SERM. conformable to such sentiments and affections, and the obligations laid upon
 III. you by his infinite love. Remember that you are to live, as well as pray piously. Let the devout worship of God be accompanied with a careful obedience to
 James i. 4. his commands: and then you are *perfect, and entire, wanting nothing.*

Thus shall these services and sacraments be fulfilled to you in a manner not now to be comprehended. You shall be admitted into those mansions which Christ is gone into heaven to prepare; and *eat and drink at his table in his kingdom.*
 Luke xxii. 30.

S E R M O N IV.

HEB. x. 8, 9, 10.

ABOVE WHEN HE SAID, SACRIFICE, AND
 OFFERING, AND BURNT OFFERINGS, AND
 OFFERING FOR SIN, THOU Wouldest
 NOT, NEITHER HADST PLEASURE THERE-
 IN; WHICH ARE OFFERED BY THE LAW:
 THEN SAID HE, LO, I COME TO DO THY
 WILL, O GOD: HE TAKETH AWAY THE
 FIRST, THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THE
 SECOND. BY THE WHICH WILL WE ARE
 SANCTIFIED, THROUGH THE OFFER-
 ING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST,
 ONCE FOR ALL.

THE religious worship of most na-
 tions in the world anciently con-
 sisted much of Sacrifices. That of the
 Jews in particular was almost wholly
 taken up with them. And it is certain,
 whether we can see the reasons of it or
 no, or whatever reasons we may fancy

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 IV.

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IV.

Gen. viii.
20, 21.

we see against it, that this way of worship was acceptable to the Supreme Being, from the days of Noah, at least, if not from Adam, to the death of Christ.

Rom. vii.
1, 16.Lev. xviii.
11.

Possibly you can see no reason why the death of Christ should recommend to the divine favour any other person than himself: can you tell me why the death of an *Animal* had ever any such efficacy? It is written, you know; (*for I speak, as the Apostle did, to them that know the law, and that consent unto it, that it is good*) *The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

Not pretending therefore to form to ourselves a religion with which we will require our Maker to be content, but acquiescing with that which he is pleased to give us, though it be, not indeed contrary to our reason, God forbid, yet
in

in some particulars wonderful even to astonishment; let us see what light may be reflected upon the Christian Faith from this part of the religion of the Jews.

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The offerings which they made of Animals to be slain, may be comprehended most commodiously, I think, under * three general classes, to which most of the particulars will be, in some sort, reducible. At least, there are three species of them very conspicuous, in many places of Scripture mentioned together, so as to be distinguished from each other, and in some, so as to be put for the whole number.

In the 40th Psalm, according to the translation in our bible, we read, *Sacrifice*

* When *Josephus* divides the Jewish sacrifices into two sorts only, he considers not the *occasion*, the *intention*, the *order*, or a multitude of other differences; but merely this circumstance, whether the whole Sacrifice were, or were not, consumed on the altar. *Antiq. Jud. Lib. 3. c. 9.*

SERM. *and offering thou didst not desire; burnt*
 IV. *offering and sin offering hast thou not re-*
 quired. Sacrifice and offering; — That
 which is here styled *offering*, is to be
 taken out of the number, being, as ap-
 pears plainly in the original, not a sacri-
 fice of any animal, but an *oblation*, con-
 sisting of flour, oil, frankincense, and salt,
 and commonly called a *meat offering*. It
 should have been so rendered here, and
 indeed is so in the older translation of the
 Psalms, generally used in the divine ser-
 vice, where it stands thus; *Sacrifice and*
meat offering thou wouldst not: burnt
offerings and sacrifice for sins hast thou not
required.

מנחה
 Levit. ii. 1,
 13.

Besides, therefore, the *meat offering*,
 which was of flour; of animal offerings,
 you see, here are three sorts enumerated,
Sacrifice, burnt offering, and sin offering.
 They are not thus put down casually,
 but with care, and quoted accordingly
 with the same exactness by the Apostle
 to the Hebrews; *Sacrifice and offering*
 2 *thou*

Hebr. x.
 5, 6.

thou wouldest not; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. SERM.
IV.

And again, no more than two verses afterwards, arguing from this passage in the Psalms, he repeats every one of the same words: *Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offerings for sin thou wouldest not.* Ver. 8.

Now the design of the Apostle is to teach us, that the whole collection of the Jewish sacrifices, consisting principally of three distinguished kinds, with the oblations that accompanied some of them, were superseded and abolished; having answered the end for which they were originally intended; having prefigured, in such measure as it pleased God, the great sacrifice of the Redeemer of mankind, and being fully and finally accomplished in his death upon the Cross.

Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst plea- Heb. x. 8,
9, 10.

SERM. *sure therein, which are offered by the*
 IV. *Law: then said he, Lo, I come to do thy*

will, O God. He taketh away the first
that he may establish the second. By the
which will we are sanctified, through the
offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once
for all.

Exod.
 c. xxix.
 Levit.
 c. viii.
 c. ix.

Upon some solemn occasions the Jewish Law directed these three sorts of sacrifice to be all offered in the following order *.

* There are indeed many passages in the Levitical Law where the sacrifices, which a worshipper brings to be offered, are set down in a different order: but it does not certainly follow that even in those instances they were offered in a different order by the priest. It is written Numb. vi. 14. *He shall offer his offering to the Lord, one He Lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one Ewe Lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one Ram without blemish for peace offerings; but you will find ver. 16, 17. the Priest is directed to arrange these very offerings in the order I have mentioned. And the Priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering, and he shall offer the Ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord.*

In

In the first place was presented the offering for sin, by him regularly that offered it. He laid his hand upon the head of the sin offering; which was then slain beside the altar, and the fat indeed burnt upon it, but the body was burnt without the camp: the person employed in the removal of it, being sometimes spoken of as defiled at second hand by its imputed uncleanness. *He shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterwards he shall come into the camp*.*

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Levit. iv.

Levit. xvi.
28.

Next,

* When another beast upon the same occasion is represented as bearing away the iniquities of the nation into a land not inhabited, the meaning seems to be, that the sins expiated by the solemnities of that day, shall no more be remembered than the beast shall be again found which is escaped into the wilderness, Levit. xvi. 21, 22. The phrase in the 10th verse, *to make atonement with him*, is a mistake in the translation, and should not be, *with*, but, *over* him: the word עליו is often used after כפר, but never, I believe, in that sense, in all the Old Testament. For the rest, we are not to wonder that by the Jewish ritual the atonement was still carried on through so many ceremonies, or even so many sacrifices, one after another, as if it were

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Next, the worshippers brought their *burnt offering*, as they had done the other, and laying their hands upon its head, presented it to God. The blood was sprinkled upon the altar, and the flesh all consumed on it. No part of it was eaten by any one. It was *an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord*.

Exod.
xxix. 18.
c. passim.

Numb.
xviii. 3.

Of this sort were the *two Lambs*, which were offered every day, the one in the morning, the other towards the evening; and along with each of them flour, oil, and wine for a meat, and a drink offering.

Numb.
xviii. 5, 7.

Of this sort are thought to have been the sacrifices of the *Patriarchs*, from the flood to the days of *Moses*. Such was that of *Noah*. He *builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offer-*

Gen. viii.
20.

never complete. It is from a similar circumstance to this, that the Apostle to the Hebrews (chap. x.) draws his fine argument for the imperfection and insufficiency of that whole dispensation.

ings

ings upon the altar. Such was the offering of Isaac, or such it was ordered to be, and such was that of the Ram in his stead. *Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering.—And Abraham took the Ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering, in the stead of his son,*

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Gen. xxii.
2, 13.

After the sin offerings, and burnt offerings, there still remained one species of sacrifices more, and these were called the sacrifices of *peace offerings*.

Of these there were various sorts, which we need not specify, this principal circumstance being common to them all; that, part being first given to the altar, and part to those who ministered at it, the rest of the sacrifice appertained to the worshippers.

At their first approach with their offerings for sin, they appeared as enemies

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IV.

or rebels; yet repenting, acknowledging the punishment which they had deserved, and submitting, by substitution, to the infliction of it.

The burnt offering which came next, was a tribute to the heavenly king, a token of their acknowledged allegiance, and renewed loyalty; and placed the worshippers in the light of faithful subjects, under his sovereign government, and omnipotent protection.

Lastly, having presented their sacrifice of peace offerings, they became, as it were, of the number of his friends and family; feasting of the same meat, and being guests at one common table with the Divinity whom they adored.

Now as all these sacrifices, considered as types, are accomplished, and the beneficial intention of every one of them finally answered, by the sacrifice of our Lord Christ upon the cross; we are not
to

to wonder if we find him compared in the New Testament to every one of them. And if one part of any such comparison should lead us to think of one of these kinds of sacrifice, and some words that follow rather turn our thoughts to another, neither is this any mighty difficulty, since he was prefigured by them all.

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St. Paul speaks of our Lord as an offering for sin. * *That he might reconcile both (Jews and Gentiles,) unto God in one body by the cross:—for through him we both have an access by one spirit unto the Father.* If there can be any doubt of this, it will be made plain by the parallel words of St. Peter. † *Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*

Ephes. ii.
16, 18.

1 Pet. iii.
18.

* Αποκαταλλάξῃ τὰς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι τῷ Θεῷ
διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ.—Δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσεγγασιν.

† Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἑπαθὲ, δίκαιον ὑπὲρ
ἀδίκων, ἵνα ἡμᾶς προσεγάγῃ τῷ Θεῷ.

Yet

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IV.

Eph. v. 2.

Προσφοράν.

Θυσίαν.

Yet, the same Apostle St. Paul, and in the same Epistle, representing our Lord again as a sacrifice, makes choice of such terms as are not commonly applied to sacrifices for sin, but to *peace* offerings, and the oblations that accompanied them : * *Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.* An offering or oblation ; it is the *meat-offering* of flour and oil which accompanied the burnt offerings, and peace offerings, but not those that were made for sin : and a *sacrifice* ; with us the word sacrifice is general, but the original word, in this place, properly denotes the sacrifice of *peace* offerings : and lastly he adds, *for a sweet smelling savour* ; which expression is not applicable to the sin offering †, but

* Παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφοράν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ Θεῷ, εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας.

† I know not that there is above one place in all the Old Testament, in which mention is ever made of the *sweet smelling savour* in the case of a sacrifice

but is common, and continually in use concerning *burnt* offerings, and the sacrifices of peace offerings.

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Let us with devout thankfulness reflect that our Saviour Christ did that truly and fully for us, and for all men, which was done, in part, or in shadow, for the Jews by all their oblations and sacrifices. *He is the propitiation for our sins: through him we have access to the Father, and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

1 John ii. 2.

Ephes. ii.
18, 19.

It hath pleased the Father of all, in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, out of the bowels of his infinite love, to effect the recovery of fallen man, through

sacrifice for sin: and there it is applied to a certain part separated from the rest of the sin offering, and treated, and spoken of expressly, as if it had appertained to a peace offering. *He shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour.*

Levit. iv.

31.

the

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IV.

the interposition of his only begotten Son:
To his wonderful incarnation, to his
holy life and doctrine, his meritorious
and bloody death and passion, his pow-
erful intercession, and the presence and
help of that Divine Comforter whom he
hath sent down to us in his stead, is ow-
ing every step we make in our progress
from sin and misery to everlasting glory
and virtue.

Ephes. ii. 3. *We are by nature the children of wrath.*
But he hath abolished in his flesh the en-
Ver. 15, 13. *mity: and now in Christ Jesus, ye, who*
sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the
blood of Christ: not only subjects of God's
kingdom, and servants in his household;
Ephes. i. 5. *but predestinated unto the adoption of chil-*
Gal. iv. 7. *dren by Jesus Christ. Wherefore thou art*
no more a servant, but a son: and if a son,
Rom. viii. *then an heir of God through Christ. He*
32. *that spared not his own son, but delivered*
him up for us all, how shall he not with
him also freely give us all things?

Instead

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Instead of disputing with presumptuous blindness against the method which God hath chosen for the salvation of mankind; let us be wise enough to accept his mercy with obedient thankfulness. Is it for us to say, on what conditions it is fit for God to forgive sins? Or do we know all the possible efficacy of the death of his Son?

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The word was with God, and was God; and the word was made flesh. And as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. Is there nothing in all this, but what must needs be plain and obvious to the meanest capacity?

John i, 1,
14, 12.

The minuteest insect, the simplest vegetable, every particle of inanimate matter, contains in its nature an abyss of wonders, which no human understanding can fathom. And is there nothing of Mystery in the incarnation of the Son of God? Can no benefit redound to mankind through his death, but what we

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must

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must needs be able to trace through all the darkness of the divine counsels?

Ecclef. vii.
15.

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity; the upright man perisheth in his righteousness: yet God is just. How much more, when He who loved us washed us in his blood, and was made a willing sacrifice for the sins of the whole world?

1 Cor. ii.
10.
viii. 2.

Even in natural subjects, the person who meets with no difficulties, learns nothing. How much more in the *deep things of God? If any man thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*

S E R.

S E R M O N V.

R O M. v. 8.

GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARDS
US, IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET
SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.

THOUGH *Christ is the end of the Law*, and he was accordingly represented with a more or less clearness, in all it's offerings; yet was there one kind of those offerings, and a particular one of the kind, by which he was prefigured in a more distinguished manner: these were the *offerings for sin*, and that solemn one in particular, which was presented in the name of the whole Jewish Nation upon the great day of the *annual Expiation*.

SERM.
V.

Rom. x. 4.

That sin offering being set apart *to* Levit. xvi.
make an atonement because of the uncleanness

SERM. *ness of the children of Israel, and because*
 V. *of their transgressions in all their sins, the*

body of the beast itself was ordered to be
removed, as a thing unclean, from the
midst of the congregation, and burnt
without the camp; but the high Priest was
commanded to take of the blood, and bring
it within the veil, and sprinkle it on the
mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.

Heb. ix. All which is thus represented and ap-
 plied by the Apostle. *The first covenant*
had ordinances of divine service, and a
worldly sanctuary. There was a taber-
nacle made, the first, wherein was the can-
dlestick and the tables, and the shew bread,
which is called the sanctuary. And after
the second veil, the tabernacle which is
called the holiest of all: which had the
ark of the covenant, and over it the cheru-
bims of glory shadowing the mercy seat.
Now the priests went always into the first
tabernacle; but into the second went the
High Priest alone, once every year, not
without blood, which he offered for himself,

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V.

and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. Which was a figure for the time then present. But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year, with the blood of others; but now, once, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. — Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. — This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. — The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also,

Heb. x, 12.

Heb. xiii.
11, 12.

SERM. *that he might sanctify the people with his*
 V. *own blood, suffered without the gate.*

Heb. vii.
25.

Thus not only the death of our Lord, but his entrance into heaven, and the intercession *he ever liveth to make* for us, were exhibited circumstantially, as the Apostle has shewn us at large, by the annual offering for sin, and the ceremonies attending it. Yet, as *all* the sacrifices under the Law, of whatever kind, were typical of the death of Christ; so, however they might differ in other respects, there was one signal circumstance common to all the *three* great classes of them, which was eminently figurative of the great sacrifice upon the cross; *Atonement* was made in every one of them by *blood*.

Heb. x. i.

For the Law could never with these sacrifices which they offered make the comers thereunto perfect. The Law seems to have been sensible, as it were, itself, of the incompleteness of its own work. The sa-
 2 *crifice*

sacrifice for sin, in the regular course, preceded the rest : it was presented, and slain. But the worshippers were not so thoroughly purified, as not to want still further purgation.

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V.

After the offering for sin, the *burnt offering* next must yield it's blood, not only to be shed, but to be sprinkled upon the altar : and this offering is expressly said to make atonement. *He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering ; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord, and the priests shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar.*

Levit. i. 4,
15.

Nay, the same ceremony, and for the same purpose, was still to be repeated in the sacrifices of *peace offerings*. *Whatsoever man there be that offereth a burnt offering, or sacrifice, (that is a peace offering), and bring it not unto the door of the tabernacle to offer it unto the Lord, that*

Levit. xvii.
8, &c.

ובח

SERM. *man shall be cut off. And whatsoever man*
 V. *eateth any manner of blood, I will set my*

face against that soul that eateth blood, and
will cut him off. For the life of the flesh
is in the blood; and I have given it to you
upon the altar, to make an atonement for
your souls: for it is the blood that maketh
an atonement for the soul.

Rom. vi. *The wages of sin is death. Repent, and*
 23. *believe the Gospel, and the death of the*
 Mark i. 15. *sacrifice becomes the life of the sinner.*

But this is *Judaism*. It is what God
 hath been pleased to make it. The re-
 ligion of the Jews is not to be utterly
 forgotten: the fabrick of Christ's religion
 rests upon it. *He came not to destroy the*
 Matt. v. *Law, but fulfil.*
 17.

But you see no reason in such an insti-
 tuti^{on}. *We preach Christ crucified; unto*
 1 Cor. i. 23, *the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the*
 25. *Greeks foolishness: but the foolishness of*
God is wiser than men.

Yes,

Yes, you can find wisdom in Christianity, when it is explained properly. Christ came to give lessons in moral virtue; and died to teach men patience.

SERM.

V.

What virtues were taught by all the sacrifices in the law of Moses? what example was set by those sufferings? Alas! though the offerer might be guilty, the victim was innocent. And could this be right, according to your rules of reason? Should not the guilty suffer, and the innocent be unpunished? What crime had the Lamb committed, that its blood should be shed at God's altar? Or which way could the sinner be the better for it? Is there any efficacy, comprehensible by human reason, in the blood of a beast to wash away the guilt of a man?

You will think of a suitable answer on your part; for to us it is sufficient, that God so ordered it. Till Christ came, this figure of his death was effectual by God's appointment. It was his pleasure; and his

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V.

II.

Leviticus xvii.

Heb. ix. 22.

his will is a reason. He hath said it, and we are satisfied. * *The life is in the blood.* and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. And again by the Apostle, without shedding of blood is no remission.

We see therefore no necessity to have recourse to metaphors on this occasion. The sacrifices commanded in Leviticus were surely not metaphorical: and the efficacy of them in the expiation of sin, to say the least, is as hard to comprehend as that of the death of Christ. It remains therefore entirely credible that the death of our Lord was a Sacrifice to Almighty God, making atonement for the sins of the world. It was typically represented by all the sacrifices of the Jews, but most eminently by the sacrifices for sin; and among them with the most elaborate solemnity by the *annual sin offering* made for the whole nation.

It

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It is but a very little way that the understanding of man, while he is here on earth, is able to advance in the knowledge of heavenly things. *The sufferings of Christ, and the glory to follow, the preaching of the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, are things which the Angels desire to look into.* The conceit, that on subjects so awful, or on any subjects, nothing can be true, that lies beyond the limits of our comprehension, if it do not take the road of enthusiasm, will naturally lead us, either to disbelieve the divine revelation, or, which is much the same, to explain it into nothing.

SERM.

V.

I Pet. i. 12.

Great is the mystery of Godliness! Far too great for the grasp of our knowledge; we can aspire towards it only with our heart and affections.

I Tim. iii, 16.

This acquaintance with so divine a Mystery we shall do well, however unworthy, to desire, and cultivate.

For

SERM.

V.

• Ephes. iii.
14, &c.

** For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints; and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; which they only know, who themselves are rooted and grounded in love.*

The amazing, unsearchable, riches of love, in the breast of the Almighty Father, which moved him to give his *only begotten*, in whom he was always well pleased, for wretched men, who had offended him; that unparalleled and astonishing affection, which induced the glorious Son of God to become a man and a sacrifice, to bear himself the punishment of our sins, and by his Holy Spirit to help our infirmities, is never perhaps to be understood fully. I do not say by man, but by any created Being. The
holy

holy Trinity alone knows what it is to love in such a manner as this. For God, says the Scripture, *is Love. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

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I John iv.
16.

The nearest and best idea of this love of God to men, is that which is in his breast, who knows what it is, to love God. The learned and ingenious, the men of brightest parts or deepest erudition, these are not the persons who have the best comprehension of the Divine Nature; but the humble, the devout, the self-denying, who are the most dead to their own desires, and the most inflamed with love to God and man.

For these two are always to go together. They always in reality do so: and where they are not both, there is neither. The beloved disciple, strongly touched with this divine sentiment, hath told us, that *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.*

I John iv.
20.

Alas!

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Alas ! we forget, surely, when we entertain such warm, and various, and never dying animosities, against our fellow-creatures, and fellow Christians, we forget, that the love of God was a love to sinners.

Heb. i. 3.

That He should love his own, and only begotten Son, who was *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*; that he should behold with some complacence and satisfaction those high orders of intellectual Beings, who serve around his throne, and never transgressed at any time his commandment, is, as we should think, natural: it would be no wonder to us. But we know little of that love. *God commendeth his love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Rom. v. 8.

The love of God to man, was love to an enemy; an obliged dependant, beloved, insensible, and ungrateful enemy. Oh ! if we have any sense of God's love, we shall never hereafter talk of our enemies.

The Death of Christ prefigured.

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mies. We can have no enemies, none that we shall ever consent to treat as such, if we have the least glimpse of what is meant by God's love to us, or any spark of love to him.

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It is only to be added, for the conclusion of all, that as love to God implies love to men, so also it involves in it, or it is sure to bring along with it, obedience to his commandments. The same divine Apostle, who knew so well, teaches us, that *this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.* 1 John v. 3.

Whatever our imaginations may be, whatever our sentiments, or sensations; there is no security or comfort for us, if we continue under the dominion of sin. Because God loved us while we were yet enemies, shall we still offend him, and yet pretend to love him?

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? Matt. vii. 22, 23.

and

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*and in thy name have cast out devils? and
in thy name have done many wonderful
works? And then will I profess unto them,
I never knew you: depart from me, ye that
work iniquity.*

END OF VOL. II.

